

A

Spiritual Remembrancer :

W Or, A Brief

DISCOURSE

OF

The DUTY of those who
attend upon the Preaching
of the Gospel.

TOGETHER

With XXXII. Epistolary Discourses, Trans-
mitted to sundry Christian Friends,
by their Absent Pastor, week after
week, very Useful for all such as are
Studious to understand the things which
belong to their Everlasting Peace.

By S. W. M. A. and Minister of
S. Wells, the Gospel of Bandur

L O N D O N,

Printed for Thomas Cockerill, at the
Atlas in Cornhill, near the Royal
Exchange. 1676.

Sarah ~~W. H. H.~~

~~1 May 1862~~

~~1 May 1862~~

2 April 1862

My dear Sarah,
I have just received your letter of the 21st inst. and am glad to hear from you. I am well and hope these few lines will find you the same. I have not much news to write at present.

Yours affectionately,
A. A. Phelps

P. O. BOX 10

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To the Reader.

THese papers are not sent abroad into the world upon any other design, than the awakening of such as are asleep in sin; The instruction and Direction of such as are translated from death to life: And the comfort and encouragement of sincere Christians in their spiritual course. I am not ignorant, that many worthy Labourers in Christ's Vineyard have gone before me in all the subjects which in this small Manual are rather hinted, than insisted on: Nevertheless, I am not without hope that these my poor Endeavours will be some way serviceable to the spiritual good of some poor Souls. The smallness of the Book, and of the Price, will (haply) be an encouragement to some both to buy and read it. And now although I have sent it to the Press, I have not done with it, but shall follow it with my Prayer

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for a blessing upon it, unto all who shall take
the pains to read it.

Yours in the Lord
Jesus Christ,

From my Study in
B. 3. Sept. 1675.

S. W.

[Faint, mostly illegible handwritten text, likely a letter or study note.]

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Acts. 20. 27.

For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the Counsel of God.

YOU find the Apostle *Paul* in this Chapter in a moving condition; as also the grounds, and reasons of his removal from place to place. Being at *Miletus*, he sends to *Ephesus*, and desires the Elders of that Church to give him a meeting. His business with them is, to let them know that he was going to *Jerusalem*, and that he was willing to take his leave of them before he went. To this purpose in a large valedictory speech, he first asserts his own integrity. 2. Acquaints them with his danger, and not only his own danger, but also the danger of all those Christians to whom he had

preached the Gospel. 3. He commends the flock of Christ to them, and them to God's grace.

My busines (at present) lyes only in the verse which I have read: Which I have not chosē with any respect to my own credit, or reputation, that I might set forth, or boast of my own Endeavour among you: No, I think it fitter for me *to abhor my self, and to repent in dust and ashes.* All that I drive at, is, to put you in mind, that the counsels of God have been declared unto you; and now at last to make a general application of all that ever I have preached in your ears.

1. By way of *Examination*. Have the Counsels of God been declared unto you? Examine your selves what reception those counsels of God have had with you. And here give me leave to propound four Interrogatories or Questions.

Q. 1. Have you been diligent attenders upon the counsels of God in his word? Little do you think what an heavy charge will one day be given in against you, if you have not frequently and diligently attended upon God in his Ordinance while you did enjoy them. Examine your selves therefore as to this particular. Have you been diligent waiters at the post of Wisdome's doors?

Q.

Q. 2. Have you received the counsels of God, as the counsels of God? It is possible for a man to do a work which yet he doth not do. The bare outward performance of a duty, is very superficial, and signifieth little; therefore (I say) have ye received those truths which you have been taught out of the word, as the counsels of God? *i. e.*

1. Have ye received them with *reverence and godly fear*? *To this man will I look, even to him that is poor, and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word,* Isa.

66. 2. Though we do not hear that noise of thunderings, and soundings of the trumpet, which was upon *mount Sinai* at the giving of the Law; yet certainly, the word is to be received with reverence, and an awful dread of the Majesty of that God who is the author of it.

2. Have you received the word with *faith*? I fear that most of us in hearing or reading the word, are like people that read *Romances*; we believe never a word we hear, or read. That question which *Paul* put to *Agrippa*, is a question which will puzzle many, *Believest thou the Scriptures*? So say I, Do you believe what hath been taught you from the word? If not, all that hath been spoken is utter-

ly lost as to your advantage; the word preached never profiteth, but when it is mixed with faith in them that hear it.

3. Have you received the word with *delight*? It is with many under this Ordinance as with those that are sick when they are urged to eat; they have no stomach to it. Nay it is to be feared we have been so far from receiving the word preached with liking, and *delight*; that we have been ready to say of the Ministers of the Gospel as *Ahab* of *Michajah*, *We hate them, for they never speak good unto us*. It is to be feared that we have hated them, even for their Message-sake: Now examine your selves as to this particular, whether you be guilty of this, or whether you have received the counsels of God, (as you ought to do) with *delight*. Is the word *sweet unto your tast*? *even sweeter than honey, or the honey-comb*? do you *delight in the Law of God after the inward man*?

4. Have you received the counsels of God with submission thereunto? *I was dumb and opened not my mouth, because thou didst it* (saith the Psalmist). Can you say so too, *I was dumb and opened not my mouth because thou said'st it*? What effects hath the word wrought in you?

you? what fruits have been produced thereby?

1. Have the counsels of God wrought upon you to a clear conviction, so as that now you understand your self to be by nature in a lost and undone condition?

2. Hath the word of God wrought so strongly upon you, as to work a godly sorrow in you? are you like *Josiah* tender-hearted at the reading or hearing God's law, of his counsels in his word?

3. Have the counsels of God prevailed so far as to work in you a firm resolution, and sincere endeavour of reformation?

Q. 4. Have you made the counsels of God your Councillors? Have you followed the counsels of God, 1. In your duties to God, 2. In your duties to your Neighbour, 3. In the duties which you owe unto your selves? Have you followed the counsels of God in your Afflictions, and in your Enjoyments? If you cannot give a good answer to these Interrogatories, then 1. Justifie God in removing his spiritual candlesticks, 2. condemn your selves for your great neglect of God's counsels, 3. Beg forgiveness of God for the same, 4. Pray for the recovery of those spiritual mercies which you have forfeited and lost.

2. By way of *Exhortation*. Have the counsels of God been declared unto you? Call to mind all that possibly you can of those counsels. Let me recommend unto you Christ's counsel to the Church of *Sardis*, *Rev. 3. 3.* *Remember therefore how thou hast received, and heard.* Recollect, and call to mind, all that you can of those precious truths that have been discovered unto you in the Gospel.

Mot. 1. Take notice, that the spirit of God in Scripture doth very much press the recollecting, or remembering those truths which have been formerly delivered from the word. See *Deut. 6. 6.* to the 10. *These words which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart, and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thy House, when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. Thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes: And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thine House, and on thy gates.* So *Malachi, 4. 4.* *Remember the law of Moses my Servant, which I commanded to him in Horeb, for all Israel, with the statutes and the judgments.* We ought so to remember the counsels of God

in his word, as to adhere thereto, and to make them the rule of our practice. See *Heb. 2. 1.* *Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip.* We must be careful that we suffer not the counsels we have received to slip out of our memories. In the *2 Pet. 1. 12, 13, 14, 15.* *Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth. Yea, I think it meet as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up, by putting you in remembrance; knowing that shortly I must put off this tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me. Moreover I will endeavour that ye may be able after my decease, to have these things always in remembrance.* The Apostle knowing the necessity that lyeth upon all to retain in their memory, those counsels which they have received from God in his word, and also our aptness to forget them, was not only earnest while he was alive, in calling upon Christians, and putting them in mind of those things which they had heard; but also careful, by leaving this Epistle upon record, that they might ever be put in mind of those spiritual truths which

which they had been taught.

Mot. 2. Take notice, that you are in a great deal of danger to let slip, and to lose what you have heard; and that 1. through *Satans* suggestions: see Mat. 13. 19. *When any one heareth the word of the Kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart.* 2. Through the world's temptations: see v. 22. of the fore-quoted chapter; *He that receiveth the seed among thorns, is he that heareth the word, and the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful.* 3. Through our own corruptions; our corrupt hearts are like crackt vessels, which will retain things that be dry, but not things that be moist and liquid: So our hearts will easily retain worldly carnal things, but they quickly let slip spiritual, and heavenly truths.

Mot. 3. Consider, that you will always have need of those counsels of God which have been delivered unto you; and that, 1. for the preventing and subduing of sin. *Thy word have I hid within me, that I might not sin against thee, saith the Psalmist.* 2. for direction in duty. The word is a lamp unto our feet, and a light unto our paths,

paths, to guide, and to direct us in the way that we should go. 3. For support under burdens, and comfort in Afflictions; *This is my comfort in my Affliction*: saith the same *Psalmist*.

Mot. 4. Consider, that you must give an account of those truths, those counsels of God which have been declared unto you: see *Phil. 4. 11.* *I desire fruit that may abound to your account.* 1. It is expected that you give a present account of the word; such an account as *Daniel*, and his fellows gave of the food with which they were fed, *Dan. 1. 15.* *At the end of ten dayes, their countenances appeared fairer, and fatter in flesh, than all the children which did eat the portion of the King's meat.* The dyet on which they fed, was coarse-fare; but the counsels of God are choice food: Therefore it is expected that you give a good account of your Spiritual Provision, and that not only by *fair looks*, or an *out-side profession*; but also by your *Spiritual growth* and *Improvement in holy obedience.* 2. You must give an account at the last day. As you must give an account of every *Idle word* which you speak; so also of every *good word* of the counsels of God which you hear. It must appear at the last day (if you stand in judgment) that ye have
beheld

beheld as in a glass the glory of the Lord, and have been changed into the same image. It must appear, that of Goats ye are become Sheep, by the Power of the Spirit in that word which hath been preached to you. Now consider these things, and endeavour to recollect and call to mind all that possibly you can of those counsels of God which you have heard.

Object. But alas! I have forgotten almost all that I have heard: wo is me, how shall I comply with the duty proposed?

Ans. If the case be thus with you, take these four following Directions.

Direct. 1. Beg of God that his Spirit may bring his counsels to your remembrance. Pray earnestly, that it may be in some measure accomplished to you, which Christ promiseth to his disciples, John 14. 26, but the comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance whatsoever I have said unto you.

Direct. 2. Be much in Spiritual meditation; tye your selves thereto at least once a day, and therein endeavour to recollect what you can of those counsels of God which have been delivered to you.

Direct. 3.

Direct. 3. Beg help from those who have taken the pains to write down what they could of the Spiritual counsels which they have heard.

Direct. 4. Get into a serious, and settled way of Obedience. I may here make use of what you read. *John. 7. 17.* *If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of my self.*

And now (my Beloved) for your further help, I will reduce a great part of what you have heard from me from time to time, by way of *Admonition, Exhortation, Comfort, and Encouragement.*

1. By way of Admonition.

Admon. 1. Take heed of letting slip the day and season of grace. As certainly as the Sun which riseth in the morning, will set at night; so certainly will the day of grace have an end. There was an end put to the ceremonial Law; and an end shall be put to the Moral Law; yea, and to the Gospel too, as to the preaching of it: O therefore take heed of losing such precious opportunities! *Now is the accepted time, now is the day of Salvation: To day if you will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.*

Admon. 2.

Admon. 2. Take heed of opposing and resisting that light which by the blessing of God may serve to convince you of your sinful and miserable state and condition. Nothing is more common, than for people to wipe their mouths with the Harlot in the Proverbs, and say *they have done nothing*; or to say with *Saul*, *I have performed the commandment of the Lord*, although the cry of their sin be louder than bleating of Sheep, or lowing of oxen, in Gods ears.

Admon. 3. Take heed of continuing under conviction without conversion.

Admon. 4. Take heed of concluding your Conversion from such premises as are either false, or short. Beware of concluding that you have faith, when you have it not; or that because you have sometimes heard *John Baptist* gladly and have done many things, That therefore you are undoubtedly heirs of the Kingdom of God.

Admon. 5. Take heed of Idleness, laziness and slothfulness, especially in spiritual business; either wholly omitting spiritual duties, or performing them slightly. What *Solomon* speaks of the *Sluggard* may be applied to many; when they should enter upon any spiritual Employment

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ployment they cry out, *Yet a little more sleep, yet a little more slumber; a little more folding of the hands to sleep.* O my friends! if you love your Souls, your precious Souls, your immortal Souls, your Souls which must ere long be either in Eternal bliss, or Eternal wo; Take heed of slothfulness in spiritual business. You cannot take too much pains for your Souls. The Apostle gives this account of his Ministry, *That he was willing to spend, and to be spent for the good of others:* And will not you be as industrious, and laborious for the Eternal Salvation of your own Souls? *work out your own Salvation* (saith the Apostle) *with fear and trembling: work it out,* make sure of it, because it is your own.

Admon. 6. Take heed of yielding to your own corrupt inclinations and dispositions. You have not worse or more dangerous Enemies than those of your own houses, your own hearts: O beware of them! Do not yield to your own corrupt inclinations, but rather according to the counsels and command of Christ, *deny your selves.*

Admon. 7. Take heed of the Society of ungodly Persons. *He that walketh with wise men* (saith Solomon) *shall be wise:*

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but a companion of fools shall be destroyed,
Prov. 13. 20.

Admon. 8. Take heed of falling off from good purposes, and beginnings. I may say of many of you, as the Apostle of the *Galatians*, *you did run well*; you have made entrance upon the ways of Godliness; you have had strong purposes of giving up your selves to God in all holy Obedience; you have resolved to hear and do whatsoever God should speak to you from his word: But God may say of you as of his people of old, *O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me and keep my Commandments always, that it might be well with them!* Now take heed of falling off from your good beginnings, of repenting of your good purposes. If you have put your hand to Christ's plow, never look back. Let not *your righteousness be as the morning Cloud, and as the Early dew which passeth away.*

2. By way of *Exhortation.*

Let these ten things find room in your hearts.

Exhort. 1. Labour to be fully convinced, and deeply sensible, that sin is the greatest folly and madness in the world
Yo

You have been often told, that *Solomon* throughout the whole Book of the *Proverbs* doth by a *fool* mean an *ungodly Person*. Truly there is no folly to the folly of sin. Is it not extream folly for a man to make himself (like *Cham*) a *Servant of Servants*? Now this is the case of the sinner, he *sells himself to work wickedness*. There is no slavery to the slavery of sin.

Exhort. 2. Get a daily Improvement of your acquittance with God, and the true knowledg of his will. *This is life eternal* (saith our Saviour) *to know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.*

Exhort. 3. Let the glory of God be your greatest *interest, aim, endeavour and comfort.*

1. Let it be your *chiefest interest*. Labour to be convinced, that it concerns you more to promote the Honour and Glory of God, than to prosecute your own most weighty, and most important affairs.

2. Let the glory of God be your *aim*. Whatsoever you do, do all to the glory of God.

3. Let the glory of God be your *main Endeavour*; endeavour it with all your might; neglect no means, seasons, or

opportunities of glorifying God.

4. Let it be your *comfort*, that God is glorified either by your selves, or others.

Exhort. 4. Resolve, enter upon, and persist in every duty how difficult, painful, costly, or dangerous soever it may prove.

Exhort. 5. Get your hearts above all the profits, pleasures, and honours in the world. Little do you think (my friends) what clogs these are to your Souls; what Impediments and hinderances they are, both to Spiritual Duties and Enjoyments. Labour to get your hearts *weaned from things below*, and to have your *affections set upon things above*: Lay up for your selves *treasures in heaven*, and then let your hearts be there also.

Exhort. 6. Be frequent and serious in the Examination of your own hearts and ways.

Exhort. 7. Be constant, frequent, fervent, and spiritual in secret Prayer and Ejaculation: Be much in your closets; and let every solitude be a time of Prayer. Pray continually, and be ever and anon sending up some request to heaven. It is a sad sign of a graceless Person, to be seldom and slight in secret Prayer.

Exhort. 8. Let family-duties be *fully, duly,*

duly, and daily performed. You would think it *ill* with any Town or Parish if they had no preacher: And truly it is far from *well* with that family, wherein Spiritual duties are not performed. O let every one of your houses be a *Bethel*, an house of God; pray with your families, teach, instruct them: Endeavour that every one within your gates may fear the Lord.

Exhort. 9. Improve your converse one with another to your mutual, spiritual advantage. Be helpful to one anothers Souls; Labour that (as the Apostle speaks in another sense) *your coming together may be for the better, and not for the worse*. Let your discourse be of things *above*, that by your converse, you may Edifie one another. But be sure to avoid those questions which may gender strife; and let your discourse be only of those things wherein ye agree.

Exhort. 10. *Walk wisely toward them that are without*. Take heed of giving Enemies occasion to speak evil of you, or of the Gospel which you profess.

3. By way of *Comfort and Encouragement* let me commend ten things to your serious thoughts.

Comfort 1. *This is a faithful saying, that*
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Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners. He came to save, yea he is able to save to the utmost, all that come to God by him.

Comfort 2. Him that cometh unto Christ he will in no wise cast out. He is ready to receive all upon Gospel-terms.

Comfort 3. Godliness hath the Promises of this life, and that which is to come; all the Promises (which in Christ are yea and amen) are a godly mans portion.

Comfort 4. It is the Blessedness of them that believe, that their transgressions are forgiven, and their sins covered.

God will not impute sin to them, he will lay no iniquity to their charge.

Comfort 5. All things shall work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

Comfort 6. God will not suffer his people to be tempted above what they are able.

Indeed in our Journey toward the Land of Promise, the heavenly Canaan, we shall meet with Enemies, we shall find our selves beset on every side; we shall be assaulted by corruptions within, and temptations without: but our comfort is, that God will gird our Souls with strength to the Battel.

Comfort 7. As a Bridegroom rejoiceth over

over his bride, so doth the Lord rejoyce over his people ; God takes pleasure in the prosperity of his Servants. As in all their afflictions he is afflicted ; so (to speak after the manner of men) in all their comforts he is Comforted.

Comfort 8. Whatsoever believers ask the Father in the Son's name, he will give it to them.

Comfort 9. Light is Sown for the righteous, and joy for the upright in heart.

It is so sown, as that it will certainly spring up, and there will be a plentiful harvest,

Comfort 10. God will be a Sun and a Shield unto his people ; he will give grace and glory, and no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.

He is the giver of all good, and a protector from all evil,

These are the counsels of God which have been at several times more largely declared to you ; Now let these sayings sink down into your hearts, and the Lord help you to bring forth the fruits of them in your lives, and conversations.

And now (Brethren) I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an Inheritance among all them which are sanctified.

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To my dearly Beloved friends
*within the Burrough and
 parish of B. in the County
 of O. grace and peace be
 multiplied.*

My dear Friends,

Although by the Providence of God,
 I am absent from you in body (I
 assure you) I am present with you in
 Spirit: and as I have always designed
 your spiritual advantage, since I came
 among you; so I will not give over the
 Service of your Souls. Although I am
 removed from you; I have had since I
 came from B. many serious reflections
 upon you (my dear Friends), whom
 I have left behind me. Many of you are
 (I hope) effectually called out of dark-
ness into a marvellous light: and others
 of you I apprehend to be under a clear,
 and strong conviction, That the state of
 Faith,

Faith, and Holiness, is the best state. You have (all of you to whom I write) declared your good affections to the Ways, and Servants of God; from whence I conclude, as *Christ* did concerning that Scribe, *Mark* 12. 34, that you are none of you *far from the Kingdom of God*. These things premised, I shall Endeavour to apply my self to your several spiritual conditions; beseeching you to be so faithful to your own Souls, as to take unto your selves every one of you, your proper portions. My purpose is, (my dearly Beloved) to be for sometime your weekly Remembrancer; and to offer unto you in every Paper, something by way of Admonition, Exhortation, or Comfort. I shall not either now, or hereafter, enlarge according to the measure of my affection, or according to the weight and importance of those Subjects on which I shall insist; but rather so contract, as that I may keep within the compass of your leisure and patience, both which will be to be considered in the transcription of what I send you. If you will join your spiritual Endeavours with mine, and not be wanting to your selves, your *labour will not be in vain in the Lord*, but will conduce much to your improvement both

in

in grace and comfort. To conclude (if such a thing may be worthy your consideration), that little which I intend to do; will both while I live, and when I am dead, be an Evident testimony of the love and faithfulness of,

*Your affectionate friend, and
Servant in Christ,*

30. March

1666.

S. W.

Admo-

ADMONITIONS.

Take heed of letting slip the day, and season of grace.

THat you may make the best of this Admonition, two things will come under consideration.

1. The Grace of God in pardoning sin, and saving sinners, is freely offered unto all unto whom the Gospel is preached. This is the scope of that gracious proclamation, John 7. 37. *If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.*

O yes! If there be any man or woman that doth sincerely and earnestly desire the advantage of a Saviour, let him or her come unto me upon Gospel-terms, and they shall have the desire of their hearts; their sins shall be forgiven, and their Souls shall be *bound up in the bundle of life*, with the Lord their God.

2. The tender of mercy and grace in the Gospel is but for a time; at most it is

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is but for the time of life. It may be applied to our present purpose which Solomon tells us, Eccles. 9. 10, *There is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave whither thou goest.* They that are dead, are not capable, of hearing, of repenting, of believing the Gospel. Again, the Gospel is a moveable mercy; therefore I say unto you, saith Christ Math. 23. 43, *The Kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given unto a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.*

By the Kingdom of God is meant the Gospel; while that is preached, it is a day of Grace: but you know not how soon the Sun will set; it may be it will go down at noon; your Gospel-light may (for ought you know) be turned into darkness, and then the season is lost.

3. The Spirit of God will not always knock at your hearts. *My spirit shall not always strive with man,* Gen. 6. 3. It may be you are sometimes (with Agrippa) *Almost perswaded to be Christians*; good thoughts and purposes come into your hearts; you have strong arguings within you to perswade you to repentance and conversion. This is the striving of God's spirit with you; but this will not always

always continue; such thoughts, desires, and purposes, may vanish away for ever. *Noah's* dove was sent forth from the Ark once, and came back again; being sent forth the second time, she came into *Noah* in the Evening: but when she was sent forth the third time, she returned no to him any more. The Dove is an Emblem of the holy Spirit, which may (perhaps) suffer a first and second rejection or repulse; but beware the third time. It is dangerous letting good motions and purposes go; for (it may be) they may never return to your Souls any more. Therefore Grace and Salvation be freely offered you; and this offer will be but for a time, seeing the thread of your lives may soon be cut, or the light of the Gospel be soon put out, or good affection be soon, and utterly lost. Take heed of letting the day and season of grace slip.

To perswade the Reader to a closure with this Admonition; I shall offer (by way of Motive) three things to Consideration.

Mot. 1. Consider (Sinners) what it is that ye let slip; It is a day of grace. All the true good that the Soul is capable of here, or hereafter, is comprehended under this one word *Grace*. When the day of

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grace is lost, Justification is lost, Redemption is lost, Heaven is lost, yea the Soul, the precious and Immortal Soul, is lost; *And what shall it profit a man to gain the whole world, and lose his Soul?*

Mot. 2. Consider what will succeed the tenders of grace, or come in the room of that grace, which is offered, and refused. The Apostle tells you that which is enough to make both your Ears to tingle, *Heb. 10. 26, 27. If we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth; there remains no more sacrifice for sin, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation which shall devour the Adversaries.* Six things of very weighty consideration lye before us in this Scripture, if we sin willfully. If we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, *i. e.* If notwithstanding the light of the Gospel of grace which shines among us we go on, and persist in the way and course, the love and practice of sin; there remains no more sacrifice for sin, *i. e.* the opportunity of getting Redemption, and Salvation by the blood of Christ, will be lost: and what follows? 1. Judgment *i. e.* the sentence of condemnation, and the execution of that sentence. 2dly. Indignation *i. e.* wrath in the highest degree, wrath

wrath to the utmost. 3. Fiery Indignation *i. e.* Indignation which burneth like Fire, or Indignation which will be expressed by Fire, even the lake which burneth with Fire and Brimstone. 4. a looking for of Judgment, *i. e.* a receiving the sentence of wrath. *We despaired of life, we had the sentence of death in our selves*, saith the Apostle 2 Cor. 1. 8, 9. When the day of grace is past it will be with the sinner as with a condemned malefactor, who looketh for nothing but Execution. 5. a certain looking for of judgment. Many Malefactors when they are condemned, entertain some hopes of a pardon, or reprieve: but when the day of grace is past, the door of hope is fast shut and locked, Judgment will certainly be executed. *David* indeed looked to perish by the hand of *Saul*, and yet he perished not; but when the door of grace is shut, it may certainly be concluded that the Soul shall perish. 6. a fearful looking for of judgment. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. *Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we perswade men*, 2 Cor. 5. 11. Knowing what a dreadful thing it will be to appear before the judgment seat of Christ in an un-renewed un-converted estate; we perswade men, yea we beg

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of them, we beseech them with tears, that they will not let the day and season of grace slip. *Master pity thy self* (said *Peter* to *Christ*); but I have more reason to say to you, Friends pity your selves. You that have natural bowels, will pity your Wives and Children when they are ready to die; and will ye not pity your own Souls which are within a step of everlasting destruction?

Mor. 3. Consider that the day of Grace (if accepted and improved) will usher in the day of Glory. Though you are sure of nothing else, yet if you can make sure of that grace which appeareth in the Gospel, ye are well enough. Attend diligently unto that of the Apostle, 1 Cor. 15. 1, 2. *Moreover brethren I declare unto you the Gospel which I have preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand, by which also ye are saved, &c. The Gospel, i.e. the grace of God in Christ, the day of grace which also ye have received, i.e. which ye have not only heard, but also belived, accepted, closed with: and wherein ye stand, i.e. Either wherein ye continue without returning to folly; or else by which ye are established in peace and comfort. Now observe what follows; by which also ye*

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are saved, i. e. by which ye have assurance of Life and Salvation. To conclude, if ye work while it is day, the day of grace; If ye give diligence to make your Calling and Election sure; if in all things ye obey the Gospel of Jesus Christ; *when Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.*

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ADMONITION II.

Take heed of opposing and resisting that light which (by the blessing of God) may convince you of your sinful and miserable condition.

THat this Admonition may be accepted and improved, four things are to be premised.

1. Every one (before conversion) is under the guilt and power of sin; beside that indisposition to good, and disposition to evil, which is in corrupt nature, there is actual pollution daily contracted by the transgression of God's Commandments, in thought, word, and deed. Unconverted Persons are *Servants to sin*, John 8. 34. *Bond-slaves to their lusts*; they are *held with the cords of their sins*, Prov. 5. 22. With *Ahab* they have sold themselves to work Wickedness.

2. As wicked men are in the bond of iniquity, so they are also *in the gall of bitterness*. Acts 8. 23. *Jeremiah* was not so miserable in the dungeon, as that person is who is under the power of sin. He is under a curse, the wrath of God abides on him; There is but a step between him and Eternal death: He is a bundle tyed up, and prepared for everlasting burnings. *If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die*, Rom. 8. 13. By death you are to understand whatsoever may render a person miserable, in soul and in body, both here and hereafter.

3. For the discovery of sin and misery; God hath (as in the Creation) made two great lights, namely his Word, and man's Conscience: 1. His Word, *I had not known sin, but by the law*, Rom. 7. 7. 2. Man's Conscience: *The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord searching all the inward parts of the belly*, Prov. 20. 27. The Spirit of man, *i. e.* conscience is the candle of the Lord: the use of a candle is to give light, and to discover those things which would otherwise be hid and concealed. Now the Lord makes use of Man's conscience as of a candle, not for his own Information (for the day and the night are both alike unto him); But that man may have

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have a sight of his own crookedness and obliquity.

4. The Endeavour of wicked men is to oppose, shun, resist, and avoid (as much as they can) that light which the word and their consciences offer to them for the discovery of their sin and misery. They say to the Seers, see not; Let not Ministers shew us our sins from the word: Let not our consciences stare in our faces. *Every one that doth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd (or discovered)* John 3. 20. The consciences of wicked men are said to be *seared*, 1 Tim. 4. 2. As Chyrurgeons sear or cauterize the flesh to make it insensible: So wicked men do what they can to deaden and stupifie their consciences, that they may not check and reprove, that they may not vex and torment them. Now take heed that you do not resist, oppose, or neglect that light by which (through the blessing of God) ye may come under a clear and thorough conviction.

Mor. 1. Consider that 'till conviction be wrought in you, there is no ground of hope that God will heal and save you. It is a sad sentence which we find recorded, *Isa. 6. 10. Make the heart of this people fat,*

fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes: lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed. If the Question be put, how come people to be converted and healed? The answer is plain, namely, by having their eyes, ears, and hearts opened, *i. e.* by having a full and clear conviction wrought in them. Now until this be wrought, there is no reason to hope that God will shew mercy to their Souls. The whole have no need of the Physician, but they that are sick. The meaning is; they who are whole in their own apprehension, and think their Souls to be in a good condition, will not look out after the means of Salvation; and if so, Salvation will be far from them. God will not alter his method of bringing men to eternal life, which is first to make them know and be sensible of the Plague of their hearts, and that gulf of misery which is ready to swallow them up: To make them cry out with the Jayler, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And then to bring them under the Faith and Obedience of the Gospel. I have heard of some who have walked in their sleep; But never did any Soul pass from death to life, that was not awakened by a thorough conviction.

Mor. 2.

Mot. 2. Consider, that God convinceth men of sin, by blessing to them the means of conviction: And therefore if you neglect the means, if you regard not the motions of God's Spirit in the word, and in your own consciences; you will still remain unconvinced. The reason why the poor man at the pool of *Bethesda* continued so long uncured, was because when the Angel went down and troubled the waters, he could not step in, and make use of them. He that steps not in, *i. e.* makes not use of Spiritual means, shall not have a Spiritual cure wrought in his Soul. *Ye will not come to me that ye might have life,* was Christ's complaint, John 5. 40. As he that cometh not to Christ by Faith, shall not have Everlasting life: So he that doth not diligently make use of those means by which conviction (which goes before believing) is by the blessing of the Spirit wrought and effected, shall never be convinced, and if not convinced, not converted; and if not converted, then not saved. And now it remains, that I answer two Questions of great import.

Qu. 1. What certain Evidences are there of a thorough conviction?

Ans. To avoid prolixity (for it is my design to be compendious) I shall briefly

lay down four things from which conviction may be concluded.

1. The convinced person believes the Authority of the Word, and acknowledgeth it to be a Law and Rule to which he owes obedience and conformity.

2. The convinced person believes, That wrath, as it is denounced, so it will be revealed from Heaven, and executed upon all the workers of iniquity: That God's sentence passed upon all the Children of disobedience, will (sooner or later) be inflicted upon them: he believes that (over and above all temporal Plagues, and Punishments) the wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God.

3. The convinced person, is not only jealous or suspicious of his own state; but concludes himself to be under the guilt of sin, and exposed to the wrath of God, both temporal and eternal. How well soever a Person under conviction may carry it before others, yet he speaks within himself after this manner: There is no peace to me, either when I go forth, or when I come in; when I lye down, or when I arise: I know not how soon the thread of my life may be cut; It had been better for me that I had never been born, if I be not truly converted.

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4. The convinced person judgeth the state of holy and Spiritual persons, to be the best state, and wisheth himself so well secured, as to his eternal condition. *Let me dye* (saith the convinced person) *the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his.*

Qu. 2. By what means is conviction ordinarily wrought?

Ans. It is the proper work of the Spirit of God. *He shall convince the world of sin,* John 16. 8. Now the Spirit accomplisheth this work either by direct and immediate influences upon the Soul; or in a conjunction, or co-operation with second causes.

1. Conviction is sometimes the result of good Education: Things which concern the everlasting peace of the Soul, being often inculcattd by Parents, or Masters, do many times prevail to the awakening of those who are asleep in sin.

2. Frequent converse with those that are good doth sometimes illighten the eyes, and warm and melt the hearts of those that are bad.

3. Great judgments either publick or personal, are sometimes mighty (through God) to work conviction even in great sinners. It is a remarkable instance which we find, *1 Sam.* 12. 1, 18, 19. *Is it not wheat-harvest to day? I will call unto the Lord*

Lord, and he shall send thunder, and rain, that ye may perceive, and see, i.e. That you may be convinced that your wickedness is great, which ye have done in the sight of the Lord, &c. Well, the Prophet prays, thunder and rain are sent, and the people are convinced: Pray (say they) unto the Lord thy God for thy servants, that we dye not; for we have added unto all our sins this evil, &c. God, often-times teacheth, i.e. convinceth sinners, as Gideon taught the men of Succoth, with thorns and briars, Judges 8. 16. Now the good Lord anoint thine eyes (Reader) with eye-salve, imagine thou art in a natural state, that thou mayest see thy self (like the Syrians. 2 Kings 6. 20.) in the midst of thine enemies.

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ADMONITION III.

Take heed of continuing under conviction without conversion.

ALthough conviction in order to conversion be a mercy of a very great magnitude; yet if a period or full point may be made before both be accomplished; if any man live and dye convinced, and not converted; it had been good for him that he never had been born. The unhappiness of conviction, not seconded with conversion, will appear from two Considerations.

Consider. 1. That it is a qualification of which the Devils are capable. *Jam. 2. 19.* *Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well, the devils also believe and tremble.* Thou doest well; this may be understood two ways. 1. Thou thinkest that thou doest well, thou concludest that there is no more required of thee for thy Salvation.

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2. Thou dost well ; it is well that thou believest that there is one God, thou art to (so far) in the way to Eternal life : thou mayest take heed of resting there : So far thou mayest go, and yet perish : even the Lord's vils, who are reserved in chains unto God, darkness unto the coming of the grand day, believe that there is one God, and da tremble. 1. They believe the Justice and Power of God as to the punishment of sin. 2. They are convinced that by their faith in sin they are exposed to wrath to themselves, and 3. The very thoughts and apprehensions of this, torments them before the time when it is very possible to be under conviction of God and yet to fall into eternal condemnation. Except your conviction exceed the complicity of Devils and damned Spirits, you who shall never enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.

Consider. 2. That a bare conviction (up unto the day of your account) will aggravate your sin, and increase your punishment. If any shall pretend dissatisfaction at the truth of this consideration, I shall set such a Scripture before him, as will reprove him (like the man not having on his Wedding-garment) speechless : see Luke 12. 47. *That servant which knew his Lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did*

according

According to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. 1. By his Lord's will you are to understand, that which is declared, commanded, threatned, and promised in the word of God. 2. To know the Lord's will, is to understand the mind of God; to be convinced of the Authority and Equity of the word, to apprehend the danger to which disobedience exposes them, and the advantages which accrue to them who give up themselves to God by faith and Obedience. 3. Preparing himself, and doing his will, signifies a conformity (in Resolution and Endeavour) to the will of God in all things referring to God's glory, and his own everlasting peace. 4. To be beaten with many stripes, implies the greatness of their punishment, who sin against conviction. Their burthen shall be much heavier than other mens burdens. Of all Sinners, none treasure up unto themselves; so much wrath against the day of wrath, as they who sin against conviction.

Qu. But when may it be said that a man is convinced, and yet not converted?

Ans. 1. When the word of God pre-
vails upon his judgment, but doth not
work upon his affections. A man that is
convinced and no more, may say to the
word,

word, what; the disciples of the *Pharisees* and *Herodians* spake guilefully and craftily unto Christ, *Mat. 22. 16. Master, we know that thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth.* A convinced person may know and believe that the word of God is true, and that it teacheth the way of God in truth; And yet not delight himself greatly in God's Commandments. *Saul* was convinced of *David's* integrity. He acknowledged that *David* was more righteous than he; but yet he never loved him as long as he lived. *Ahab* hated *Micajah*, and he gave this as the reason, *2 Chron. 18. 7. For he never prophesieth good to me, but always evil.* *Ahab* doth not charge the Prophet with speaking falsely, but with prophesying evil. It is probable (if it be certain) that *Ahab* was convinced that *Micajah* was a true Prophet, and that the word of the Lord in his mouth was true; but he could not love him, because he crossed him in the prosecution of his wicked designs.

Ans. 2. A man may be said to be convinced, and not converted, when he seeks for subterfuges and lurking-places; when he endeavours to shun and avoid known truths, and to escape the dint of the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

Saul was convinced, that it was his duty to fulfil the command of God in a total destruction of the *Amalakites*, and of all that belonged to them: And therefore that he might not appear guilty of disobedience, he skreens himself (as it were) behind the people, transferring the fault upon them, 1 *Sam.* 15. 15. *The people spared the best of the sheep, and of the oxen.* Now when a man endeavours to evade the word, and to secure himself from the condemnation of it, it is a sign that he is convinced, but not converted.

Ans. 3. A man may be said to be convinced, but not converted, when from an apprehension of some excellency in the word, he takes some kind of pleasure in it, expresseth a reverent respect to the Preachers of it, and engageth in the performance of some duties. A full instance of this you have in *Herod*, *Mark* 6. 20. *For Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just man, and an holy, and observed him: And when he heard him, he did many things, and heard him gladly.* You have in this Scripture a very full account of *Herod's* conviction. Five things are here to be taken notice of; 1. He feared *John* i. e. revered him. 2. It was upon a good account, knowing that he was a just man,

man, and an holy. 3. He observed him the word *συντήρειν*, signifies to save and preserve. *Herod* protected *John* a good while, from those who sought to destroy him. 4. When he heard him, he did many things, *i. e.* he was in many things conformable to what *John* preached. 5. He heard him gladly; he had a great mind to be at *John's* Sermons; He thought *John* a good Preacher, he loved to hear him; yea, though *John* was a *Boanerges*, a Son of thunder, though his reproaches were sharp and cutting, his words as rough, as his raiment; yet *Herod* loved to hear him. And is not all this enough to make up the character of a godly man? If this will not serve turn, who then shall be saved? Reader, the five particulars which have been laid before thee, amount to no more than *Herod's* conviction. That he was not converted, is too too evident; for he continued wallowing in the mire of his filthiness, kept his *Delilah* in his bosom, and sacrificed the head of the Baptist to the rage and cruelty of those that hated him. And now, O thou every one that reads these lines, wouldst thou commune with his own heart, and make a true discovery of his own spiritual state? Will it suffice thee (Reader) that thou

hast gotten as far as they who *shall never see light, but the wrath of God abideth on them?* John 3. 36. Dost thou think that the light of conviction will secure thee from that outer darkness, where shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth? conviction indeed is a kind of conception; but woe be to that person, who is but like an Embrio in the womb, which is not perfectly formed, nor ever brought forth. *Verily, verily, (saith Christ John 3. 3.) I say unto thee, except a man be born again, (or from above) he cannot see the Kingdom of God.* A complaint may be made, and a lamentation may be taken up concerning Persons that cannot get beyond conviction. In the words of *Hezekiah* which he sent to *Isaiah*, 2 Kings 19. 3. *The children are come to the birth, and there is not strength to bring forth.* If Hell were distributed into distinct Classes, (as in a fence it is) first, Some there are in that place of torment, the eyes of whose understanding were always so blinded, and whose Consciences were always so seared; that they were never considerably apprehensive of their sin and misery. Secondly, there are others who have attained to such a measure of Illumination and Conviction, that (with *Agrippa*) they have almost
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been perswaded to be Christians. Now take heed that your present conviction conclude not hereafter in everlasting condemnation. My hearts desire, and prayer to God for thee, (Reader) is that thou mayst be saved: And in order to thy Salvation; that thou mayst be converted. And in order to thy conversion, that thou mayst be convinced. The good Lord begin the good work in thy Soul. May thine eyes be opened, thine affections be melted. May thy Spirit be renewed, thy life reformed; and then the Salvation of the Soul will be out of doubt. Blessed is he whose eyes are so anointed, with eye salve; that whereas he was once blind he can now see: But (above all others) blessed is he, who like the man born blind *John 9.* becomes a disciple of Christ; believeth on his name, and walketh with him.

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ADMONITION IV.

*Take heed of concluding your
Conversion, from such premi-
ses as are either false, or
short.*

AMong all the mistakes, to which the
Children of men are liable, the most
common, and most dangerous is, when
they think that because they have heard
John the Baptist gladly, and done many
things, therefore they are undoubtedly
heirs of the Kingdom of Heaven. Reader,
God forbid, that I should break the
bruised reed, or quench the smoking flax.
If any sincere Soul mourn under a jealousy,
or suspicion of it's own uprightness, or
security; God forbid, that I should add
affliction to the afflicted. On the other
hand, if the Spirit of God beareth wit-
ness with thy spirit, that thou art God's,
that thou art called according to his pur-
pose,

pose, that thou art translated from death to life: God forbid that I should make any heart sad, which God would not have made sad: But for as much as this Admonition will (probably) be read by persons of different Principles and Conditions, I must deal faithfully with them, who are not faithful enough to their own Souls. For the Improvement of this Admonition, it will be to be enquired, 1. What Conclusions (as to Conversion) may be said to be false. 2. What pretences to Conversion may be said to fall short of it.

Qu. 1. What Conclusions (as to Conversion) may be said to be false?

Ans. 1. He that concludes himself to be converted, though he never had any serious apprehension, or sense of, nor sorrow for the sin of his nature and practice, concludes falsely. Conversion brings a man to the glass of the Word, which represents to him such an ugliness, and deformity, that he is loathsome and abominable in his own eyes. As a person sometime fair and beautiful, having been sorely smitten with the small-pox, and afterward looking in a glass, beholds nothing in his face but pits, and seames, weeps and is troubled at the sad change which he finds there: So the converted person finding nothing but

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but the deformity of sin, where the beauty of holiness, originally was, he moans himself, and cries out with the leper under the Law, unclean, unclean. Again, as a man who hath been long trading in the World: and at last casting up his accompt, finds himself in debt much beyond what he is worth, is ready to tear his hair, and is even swallowed up of grief and sorrow: So he who is seriously engaged in the business of Conversion, examining himself strictly, as to his thoughts, words, and deeds, and finding himself over-head and ears in the debt of sin, is presently filled with anguish; all his drink tastes like gall, and his meat like Wormwood. Now he that saith he is converted, and yet was never acquainted with this sense and sorrow, deceives himself, and the truth of Conversion is not in him.

Answ. 2. He that concludes himself converted, though he never apprehended the wrath of God hanging over his head, nor saw himself in a lost and perishing condition, concludes falsely. True Conversion first opens the gate of Hell, sheweth the sinner the lake burning with Fire and Brimston. Before Conversion, men go on in the pursuit of sin; as *Balaam* went forward toward *Balak*, *Numb. 22. 21.*

Now as Gods anger was kindled against *Balaam*, because he went ; so God is angry with the wicked every day. Indeed it is with sinners, as it was with *Balaam* a good while ; who saw not the Angel of the Lord with a drawn sword ; but at last the Lord opened the eyes of *Balaam*, and he saw the Angel of the Lord standing in the way, and his sword drawn in his hand : And then he bowed down his head, and fell flat on his face. Conversion openeth the sinners eyes, sheweth him the Angel of God with a drawn sword, ready to slay him, and makes him cry out, wretched man, that I am, who shall deliver me ? We read, *2 Kings* 1. Of two Captaines of fifties, sent by *Ahaziah* to apprehend *Elijah* the Prophet : both the Captaines and their fifties were destroyed by fire which came down from Heaven : afterwards a third Captain with his fiftie was sent upon the same errand ; but he knowing what befell those who were sent before him, fell on his knees before *Elijah* and besought him, and said unto him, *O man of God, I pray thee let my life and the lives of these fifty thy Servants be precious in thy sight : Behold there came fire down from Heaven, and burnt up the two Captaines and the former fifties with their fifties ; now*
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herefore let my life be precious in thy sight. (Reader) this is the voice, and supplication of the awakened sinner; when he is in the pangs of the new-birth. Ah Lord! not fifties, but thousands, yea millions of sinful Souls are swallowed up of the bottomless pit. I am at the brink of the same destruction: Lord, let the life of my Soul be precious in thy sight, and save me from these everlasting burnings which are ready to seize upon me. Now he that concludes he is converted, and yet was never affrighted with the apprehension of his danger of the wrath to come; nor made it his business to be saved from it, concludes falsely, and deceives his own Soul.

Ans. 3. He that concludes he is converted, though his heart be not changed, nor his life reformed, concludes falsely. Conversion makes a man a new creature. *Old things are past away, behold all things are become new,* 2 Cor. 5. 17. A converted person hates that sin which he loved, and loves that holiness which he hated. His paths were formerly crooked, but now *he makes straight paths for his feet,* Heb. 12. 13. He that saith he is converted, and yet hath not put off concerning the former Conversation the old man which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts? H

that faith he is converted, and yet is not renewed in the spirit of his mind, nor hath put on the new man which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness, Eph. 4. 22, 23, 24. his Conclusion (as to Conversion) is utterly false.

Qn. 2. What pretences to Conversion may be said to fall short of it?

Ans. 1. The Improvement of a natural understanding as to the notion of things which are of a Spiritual or Eternal Import. As a Parrot may be taught to speak many words and sentences, and pronounce them much like a man, and yet be as far off as ever he was from Principles of reason: So a carnal man may by reading and conference, attain to the knowledge of many spiritual truths, and yet remain a carnal man still.

Although knowledge be absolutely necessary to Salvation, yet Conversion cannot have its denomination from empty notions: There are indeed a great many to whom we may apply that which is said of *Simon the Sorcerer, Acts 8. 9. He bewitched the people of Samaria, giving out that he was some great one.* Many Professours are such Masters, even of Spiritual language, that they (as it were) bewitch their hearers into admiration of them;

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and by their excellent discourse give out that they are Christians of an high form; when as the Foundation of Holiness (which is Conversion) is not laid in their Souls. *Though I speak with the tongues of men and of Angels, and have not Charity, I am become as a sounding brass, or a tinkling Cymbal, 1 Cor. 13. 1.* Yea I am nothing (as it follows in the two next verses.) What the Apostle speaks of Charity, is true of Conversion: if that be wanting, discourse is nothing; and yet there are many who have nothing but a faculty of discoursing to plead for their Conversion.

Ans. 2. The cessation or intermission of some sinful practises, doth pass with some for Conversion, but it doth not reach it. Nay a man may quite give over some sinful course, as the drunkard his drunkenness, the unclean person his uncleanness, the swearer his swearing, the thief his stealing, and yet the work of Conversion be unwrought. Some out-works may be taken, and yet the Garrison hold out. A man may quit somewhat of his sinful Interest, and yet not give up himself by true Conversion to Jesus Christ.

Ans. 3. A man may do many good actions, perform many good duties; read, and hear,

hear, pray, relieve the poor, joyn himself with the disciples of Christ in spiritual exercises, spiritual conference, a godly profession; he may be glad when the people of God prosper, and be sorry for their sufferings, and yet be in a carnal, and unregenerate state. These things considered, what remains (Reader) but that I enforce the Admonition? Take heed of concluding your Conversion from such premises, as are either false, or short.

Mot. 1. Consider that such mistakes in this Case are seldom rectify'd. I may apply to those, who think they are converted, but are not, what Christ speaks, *Mat. 21. 31. Verily I say unto you, that the publicans and harlots go into the Kingdom of God before you.* The words are directed to the chief Priests, and Elders, who thought their Spiritual condition very good: but Christ tells them, that the Publicans, and Harlots, repented and believed; being conscious to themselves of their own wickedness, they were sick, and therefore made use of the Physician; but the Priests and Elders were whole in their own opinion, and therefore did not come to him that they might have life. *Seest thou man that is wise in his own conceit? there is more hope of a fool than of him, Prov. 26.*

12. If any man be converted only in his own conceit, there is more hope of one who lyes open to the Clamours, and Accusations of his own Conscience, though he drink iniquity like water.

Mot. 2. Consider that the Consequences of mistaking as to Conversion, are of all others the most sad, and mischievous. It is bad for a Traveller in his Journey to mistake his way; but for a man to lose his way to Heaven, is sad beyond Expression. We looked for light, but behold darkness; (will poor deceived Souls say at last) we looked for an Inheritance with the Saints in light; but behold! We are cast into outer darkness: we once laughed, but now we weep, and gnash our teeth.

Mot. 3. Consider that if ye make sure of Conversion, you will be happy even in the midst of all other uncertainties. (Reader) we are all upon ticklish terms; as to our outward man: We know not whether we shall have wars, or peace, sickness, or health, whether we shall be rich, or poor, whether we shall live, or dye; but this we know if we be converted indeed, all things shall work together for our good. If we be called to suffer, yet our light afflictions which are but for a moment,

moment, will work for us a far more exceeding, and eternal weight of Glory.

Quest. When may a man be said to be converted, beyond those pretences which are false, or short? Or when may a man be said to be truly and thoroughly converted?

Answ. There are four Evidences of true and thorough Conversion: Of which if any be wanting, a man cannot comfortably conclude the goodness of his spiritual state: And if he can discover them in himself, he hath no reason to doubt it.

1 *Evid.* Godly sorrow which is a sincere bewailing the guilt, and Pollution of sin; *They shall look upon me, whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him as one mourneth for his only Son; and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his first-born, Zech. 12: 10.* The Apostle Paul made the Corinthians sorry with a letter, and rejoiced that they were made sorry after a godly manner, 2 Cor. 7. 8, 9. A woman when she is in travel hath sorrow, John 16. 21. when Christ is formed in the Soul, and there is a spiritual production or bringing forth, it is not without pain and sorrow. The converted person like the captive-Israelites by the waters of Babylon, sits down and weeps

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He hangs his harp upon the willows, and cries out with the Psalmist, *Psal. 38. 4. Mine iniquities are gone over my head, as a heavy burthen, they are too heavy for me.* Yea this sorrow continues till God speaks peace. Till Christ by his Spirit saith to the Soul, be of good cheer, thy sins be forgiven thee.

Evid. 2. A second Evidence of true Conversion, is a loathing, hating, detesting of all sin, both in himself, and others, upon the account of its contrariety to the Holiness and Will of God, and because God is dishonoured by it.

1. It is a loathing of sin. It is not enough to say of sin, as we say of some kind of meats, I can eat it, but I do not care for it, I had rather let it alone; sin to a truly converted person is like such meat against which a man hath an antipathy, the sinell, the taste, yea the very sight of which is an offence to him. *An unjust man is an abomination to the just, Prov. 29. 27. I hate the work of them that turn aside, Psal. 101. 3.*

2. A converted person hates sin in himself as well as in an other. *Ye shall loath your selves in your own sight for all the evils ye have committed, Ezek. 20. 43.* Many persons condemn that in others which they allow

allow in themselves; but he that is truly converted is most sensible of the spots in his own face. As one that is cleanly cannot endure his own hands, when he hath accidentally touched any thing that is filthy, and impure: So a godly man when he hath contracted the guilt of any sin upon a discovery of it loathes, and abhors himself.

3. A converted person hates all sin, as *every shepherd was an abomination to the Egyptian*, Gen. 46. 34. *I hate every false way*, Psal. 119. 104. First, sins of pleasure are an abomination to a converted person, he flees from them, as *Joseph* fled from *Potiphar's* wife. As the want of a garment in cold weather, and as vinegar upon nitre, so are the very songs of sin, the best of sinful delights to a converted Soul; yea that sin which formerly was pleasing to him, and which he longed after, comes to him like *Tamar* to *Amnon*, of whom we read, that the hatred wherewith he hated her was greater than the love wherewith he had loved her.

Secondly, Sins of profit are an abomination to a converted person. The truth of this may be Illustrated by that promise, *Isa. 30. 22. Ye shall defile also the covering of thy graven Images of silver,*

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and the ornament of thy molten Images of gold; thou shalt cast them away as a menstruous cloth, thou shalt say unto it, get thee hence. Though silver and gold be mens gods, while they are in the state of nature; though their hearts run after their covetousness; yet when the work of Conversion is wrought, even sins of profit become abominable.

4. A converted person hates all sin upon the account of its contrariety to the Holiness of God. As God is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity; so is a godly man, and therefore he cannot behold it because it is unsuitable to Gods purity. As men reject that money that hath not the Kings Image upon it, so a converted person will not own that way, course, or practise, which doth not bear the Image of God, viz. Righteousness, and Holiness.

5. A converted person loathes, and hates sin, because of its contrariety to the will of God. That which causeth grief in a godly person causeth also loathing, and abhorrency: And what that is you will find *Psal. 119. 136. Rivers of water run down mine eyes, because men keep not thy law.* It is a great burden to the Spirit of a godly man, when he perceives that the Laws of God have been broken, either by others, or by himself.

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6. A godly man hates, and loathes all sin, because God is dishonoured by it. With what indignation, as well as lamentation doth *David* speak, - when he bewailes the death of *Saul*, 2 Sam. 1. 21. *Ye mountains of Gilboa, let there be no dew; neither let there be rain upon you; for there the shield of the mighty is vilely cast away, the shield of Saul, as though he had not been anointed with oyl.* This is the complaint of a godly man, how is the glory of the mighty God eclipsed, as if it were a common, or a mean thing! *How long will ye turn my glory into shame!* was the Psalmists Expostulation, *Psal. 4. 2.* but much more are the Spirits of Gods people disturbed, when the glory of God is turned into shame, when God is dishonoured.

3. Evidence of true Conversion, is when a man doth not only loath and hate sin, but also denies and resists it in his practice and conversation. *They also do no iniquity, Psal. 119. 3.* A converted person complies with that command of God, *Ezek. 18. 31. Cast away all your transgressions whereby ye have transgressed.* A godly man gives over the trade of sin; forsakes those sins which he hath loved and practised, and resists and withstands all those overtures unto sin, which afterward are made unto him.

him. Indeed sinful motions are commonly accepted by sinful persons. If any say to a wicked man, *Come let us lay wait for blood, let us lurk privily for the innocent without cause; we shall find all precious substance, we shall fill our houses with spoil. Come let us go to the Tavern, or Ale-house, let us eat, drink, and be merry:* Wicked men will meet such motions half way: But if they be made to a converted person, he will say, *How shall I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?*

4. Evidence of true and thorough Conversion, is an upright and earnest endeavour of conformity to all that God commands. A converted person speaks truly, what the *Israelites* spake dissemblingly, and hypocritically, *Deut. 5. 27, Go thou near and hear all that the Lord our God shall say; and speak unto us all that the Lord our God shall speak unto thee; and we will hear it and do it.* The account which the Centurion gave to Christ of his Soldiers and Servants, is very applicable to converted persons; *I say to one go; and he goeth; to another come, and he cometh; and to my servant, do this, and he doth it.* If God saith to *Abraham*, *Get thee out of thy country, and from*

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thy kindred, and from thy fathers house, unto a land that I will shew thee : *Abraham* will presently depart as the Lord hath spoken ; yea if God commands him to offer up his Son, his only Son *Isaac* whom he loveth, for a burnt-offering, *Abraham* will not confer with flesh and blood. Now O that they who pretend to be the children of *Abraham*, would do the works of *Abraham*, which is the work of God. Reader, It will never be well with thee, till that which is written in the Volume of Gods Book, be written also in thy heart, as the Psalmist speaks in the person of Christ, *Psal. 40. 7, 8. Then said I, Lo I come ; in the volume of the book, it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God, yea thy law is within my heart.* To conclude, Dost thou sincerely wish that thine head were waters, and thine eyes a fountain of tears, that thou mightest weep, day and night for thy sin ? Dost thou resist sin, flee from it, as from a serpent, yea and abstain even from the appearance of evil ? Lastly dost thou not only eschew evil, but also do good ? dost thou gird thy self, that thou mayst serve thy great Master in all holy Obedience ? Flesh and Blood hath not revealed this unto thee, nor wrought this in thee. Happy shalt thou

thou be, and it shall be well with thee.
Thou art entred into a state of grace, which
shall be perfected in a state of glory.

ADMONITION V.

*Take heed of Idleness, Laziness,
Slothfulness, especially in
Spiritual business, either whol-
ly omitting duties, or perform-
ing them slightly.*

THAT I may improve this Admonition
(Reader) to thy best advantage;
I will, 1. Endeavour to make it clear to
thy understanding. 2. Labour to work it
upon thy affections. By way of Explica-
tion I shall lay down two Positions.

Pos. 1. The business of a Christian is so
much, so hard, and of such great Impor-
tance, that much labour and diligence is
necessary to the right and effectual dis-
patching

patching of it. First a Christian hath much business to do, much business with God, such as Prayer, Reading and Hearing the word, Meditation, &c. Much business with his neighbour; to wit, Instruction, Admonition, Reproof, Exhortation, Direction, Consolation, &c. Lastly much business with his own Soul, namely self-examination, self-judging, self-watching as to thoughts, words, and actions; self-humbling, self-reforming. Cast up all these particulars, and consider that they are indispensable duties; and then you cannot but acknowledge that you have very much business before you. 2. This work and business of a Christian is very hard:

- *Read. 1.* Because the flesh is weak. *Moses* did much dread the Employment upon which God put him, when he sent him to *Pharoah*; and the reason which he alledged, was his insufficiency for so great a work. *Who am I that I should go unto Pharoah, and that I should bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?* *Exod. 3.11.* And again, *O my Lord, I am not eloquent, &c. but I am slow of speech, and over slow of tongue.* *Exod. 4.10.* It may be said in reference to all spiritual business, *Who is sufficient for these things?* *1 Cor. 16.*

- *Read. 2.* Because spiritual duties are very unsuitable

unsuitable to corrupted nature, and corrupted nature to spiritual duties. I may here apply that of the Apostle, *Gal. 5. 17, For the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other; so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.*

Reas. 3. Because strong temptations for the most part stand in the way of a Christians obedience: 1. Temptations from Satan; *We would have come unto you (even I Paul) once and again, but Satan hindred us,* 1 *Thes.* 2 18. The Devils work is to keep Christians from working. 2. Temptations from the World, the men of the World, the pleasures of the World, and the afflictions that are in the World: *In the world ye shall have tribulation,* John 16. 33. He that rows against wind and tide, finds it hard labour; and such is the work of a Christian by reason of outward Temptations, and inward corruptions. 3. The work of a Christian is of great Importance: This may be concluded from two considerations; 1. It makes most for Gods glory: *Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit,* John 15. 8. By fruit you are to understand the fruit of holy Obedience. Now (saith Christ) herein is my Father glorified; as if he should say, there is no such

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clear way of glorifying my Father, as by obeying his commands, and doing his work. 2. Everlasting happiness (under Christ) depends upon doing this work. *Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; but he that doth the will of my Father which is in Heaven, Mat. 7. 21.* Now, certainly that which stands in so near relation to the glory of God, and salvation of man, must needs be a business of great importance, and therefore much labour and diligence is necessary to the right and effectual dispatching of it.

Pos. 2. Such is the Idleness, Laziness, and Slothfulness of many people, that they either wholly omit, or else slightly perform spiritual duties. 1. Many (upon the matter) wholly neglect spiritual duties. How many families are there, wherein Praying, Reading, Instructing Children and Servants, are seldom or never performed? How many are there that are utterly strangers to Communion with God in their closets? How few are there that are faithful to the souls of their Neighbours, by instructing, reprovng, admonishing, and exhorting them? How small, and inconsiderable is the number of those, who are faithful to themselves, by searching,
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and trying their own hearts and ways, by giving diligence to make their Calling and Election sure; and working out their own Salvation with fear and trembling? How few are there that seriously prosecute the great concerns of their Souls? How few are there that labour with so much earnestness and intention of spirit, for the meat which endures to everlasting life, as they do for the meat which perisheth?

2. Many, yea most of those who would be thought to be better than others, are very slight in the performance of spiritual duties.

Quest. When may a man be said to perform Spiritual duties slightly?

Ans. 1. When he performs them without preparation; when he does not labour to get his heart in a good and spiritual frame; when he does not set God before him; when he doth not beg and wait for the assistance of Gods Spirit.

Ans. 2. When he admits vain and wandering thoughts into his heart, while he is upon the performance of a duty.

Ans. 3. When he performs duties without fervency of spirit, without life and Affection.

Ans. 4. When he contracts and shortens his performances more than is fit,

only to gratifie his corruption.

Answ. 5. VVhen he attends not some spirital Issue and Effect of every performance. Holy duties are not only duties which we owe to God, but also Spiritual medicines for our Souls. He that is in a course of Phyfick, observes the operation of the Phyfick which he hath taken. If I lay a plaister to a cut finger, I am very inquisitive how it draws forth corruption, and promotes a cure: And truly, he that regards not the spirital success of spirital duties upon his Soul, is very slight in the performance of them. Now then (Reader) let me press the Admonition upon thee? Take heed of Idleness, Laziness, Slothfulness in spirital business.

1. Take heed of a total omission.

Mot. 1. This will speak thee an Atheist: And he is but a fool who saith in his heart, *there is no God*, Psal. 14. 1.

Mot. 2. If thou art slothful in, or neglectful of thy spirital work, *Thou art an unprofitable servant, and wilt be bound hand and foot and cast into outer darkness, where will be weeping and gnashing of teeth*, Mat. 25. 30.

2. Take heed of a slight performance of spirital business.

Mot. 1. The best of thy care and diligence

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gence will be little enough. Spiritual work is not done with a wet finger: *In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat thy bread* (said God to *Adam* when he had sinned); and truly the soul without care and pains, will not be nourished to eternal life.

No ground is so hard to be Plough'd, as the fallow ground of a mans heart. As the reward of a Christian is the greatest reward, so the work of a Christian is the most intricate and difficult.

Motive 2. Slight performances are a slighting of our great Master, who hath put all our spiritual work into our hands.

Motive 3. The more serious, and diligent a man is in the constant performance of all holy duties, the more will his stock of Grace be improved here, and the more clear, and unquestionable will his Title be to Glory hereafter. *Reader*, It will abundantly recompence all thy labour, if it shall be said unto thee in the day of thy account, *Well done good and faithful servant, &c. enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.*

ADMONITION. VI.

*Take heed of yielding to your
own corrupt Inclination and
Disposition.*

FOUR things are here to be inquired into. 1. What Inclination or Disposition may be said to be corrupt? 2. What is it to yield to a corrupt Inclination? 3. What is the evil of yielding thereunto? 4. How may a corrupt Inclination or Disposition be overcome or subdued?

Qu. What Inclination or Disposition may be said to be corrupt?

In Answer to this Question, I shall shew Two things: 1. What an Inclination or Disposition is. 2. Upon what account it may be said to be corrupt. 1. By Inclination or Disposition, I mean an apprehension of some desirableness in such or such an Object. An instance of this you have in the First woman that ever was, *Gen. 3.*

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When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise; she took of the fruit thereof, &c. Before she took the fruit, she apprehended it to be lovely and desirable. 2. By Inclination or Disposition, I understand the working of the affection toward any Object, so apprehended: As if a man should say, I would be doing with such or such a thing, I like it so well; my mind hankers after it, I have a good mind to it.

2. An Inclination or Disposition may be said to be corrupt, 1. When the Object of it is sinful or unlawful: If a man be inclined or disposed to any thing which is contrary to the mind or will of God, that Inclination or Disposition is corrupt. There are many things which a man may like, and love, and yet not sin; of this nature are all the outward comforts and accommodations with which the Providence of God furnisheth the Children of men: But when a man shall desire them as impatiently as *Rachel* did children, *Give me children or else I dye*: when a man shall so set his heart upon them, as to love them more than God: When a man shall use unlawful means for the obtaining of them, and run the hazard of losing better things for the keep-

keeping and enjoying of them: It is too too evident that the Inclination or Disposition is sinful and corrupt.

Qu. 2. What is it to yield to a corrupt Inclination or Disposition?

Answ. 1. A man may be said to yield to it, when upon a discovery of it he doth not mourn and grieve for it. A man that is afraid of a Lethargy, is troubled at his drowziness, his disposedness to sleep: he complains to his friends, Oh! I am so sleepy that I cannot keep my eyes open; sure some sad disease is growing upon me: When a godly man perceives a spiritual drowziness upon his soul, he cries out with the Psalmist (in another sense) *Lighten mine eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death.* Now he to whom a corrupt Disposition or Inclination is no matter of grief or trouble, he may be said to yield to it.

Answ. 2. A man may be said to yield to a corrupt Inclination or Disposition, when he does not resist it, and strive against it. If the Soldiers of a Garison do not shut their Gates, nor stand to their Arms when they see an Enemy approaching; it may be justly charged upon them that they yield to the Enemy. They who when they find a corrupt Disposition seising upon them, put not on the whole Ar-

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mour of God, stand not upon their Guard, use not spiritual Weapons in a way of resistance, are verily guilty of yielding to it. A godly man deals with those thoughts that flow from a corrupt Disposition, as *Abraham* dealt with the Fowls which came down upon the Carcasses, *Gen. 15. 11*, *When the Fowls came down upon the carcasses, Abraham drove them away.* He that makes not a strong and a violent Opposition against his sinful Disposition, yields to it.

Ans. 3. A man may be said to yield to a corrupt Inclination or Disposition, When he Acts, Accomplishes, puts in Practice that to which he is sinfully disposed. The difference between a godly and an ungodly person (as to sinful Inclinations and Dispositions) may be illustrated by what we read of *Saul's Foot-men*, and of *Doeg the Edomite*, *1 Sam. 22. 17, 18*, *The King said to the foot-men that stood about him, Turn and slay the Priests of the Lord: But the servants of the King would not turn their hands to fall upon the Priests of the Lord. And the King said unto Doeg, Turn thou and fall upon the Priests; and Doeg the Edomite turned, and he fell upon the Priests, &c.* Corrupt Disposition will put a godly man upon many sinful practices;

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but he (like the Kings Servant) refuseth the Imployment: But if a *Doeg*, an ungodly person be commanded by his corrupt nature or disposition, he is a willing Servant, yields himself to the *Law of sin in his Members*; which is evident by his *fulfilling the lusts of the flesh*.

Qu. 3. What is the evil of yielding to a corrupt Inclination or Disposition?

A. I shall lay down three Considerations which will serve both for Answers to the Questions, and also for Arguments or Motives to press the Admonition, viz. That you take heed of yielding to your own corrupt Inclination or Disposition.

Consid. 1. That yielding to a corrupt Disposition, is an owning of sin; corrupt Inclinations are in themselves sinful: It is sin to be prone and disposed to sin; and therefore to yield to that proneness and disposition to sin, is to own sin.

Consid. 2. That corrupt Inclinations become more strong by being yielded unto. As the rendition of a Garrison to an Enemy strengthens his hand; so a corrupt Disposition becomes more strong, if the gates of the Soul stand open to it, if no resistance be made against it.

Consid. 3. That to yield to a corrupt Disposition, is to betray the Soul to sin.

tual diseases, and to eternal death: As a man that being inclined to Drunkenness, yields to that inclination, contracts many bodily distempers, and hastens his own end: So the yielding to a sinful Disposition exposeth the soul to sinful distempers, and to everlasting destruction. *What fruit had ye in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of these things is death,* Rom. 6. 21. As if the Apostle had said, Ye were strongly addicted and inclined to the service of your lusts; but upon better consideration ye have discovered the evil and mischief of that Inclination: Ye are now convinced, that if ye had gone on according to the former bent and disposition of your souls, you had perished for ever; *For the end of those things is death.* David was strongly set upon, and disposed unto the slaying of all the Males in Nabal's Family: But afterward he blessed God that had stopt his course, and kept him from acting according to his own inclination and purpose. There will be cause enough of blessing God to Eternity, if He shall keep you from yielding to your own inclinations and purposes.

Q. 4. How may a corrupt Inclination or Disposition be overcome, or subdued?

A. 1. Ponder seriously how evil and dan-

dangerous it is; reflect often upon that which is laid down in the Answers to the immediately preceding Question: if the heart be turned against any thing, it will more easily get off from it.

A. 2. Call in divine assistance by Prayer and Supplication: Take unto thee such words as these; Lord, besides Temptations without, I have a corrupt heart within; I find an inward compliance with *Satan's* Suggestions: I am ready to close with every motion to evil: Now Lord help me, and let not a corrupt disposition have Dominion over me. Lord make me hate that sin which I love; turn the stream of my affections another way.

A. 3. Put thy self upon, and engage earnestly, and constantly in such practices, as are contrary to thy corrupt Inclination and Disposition. If corruption commands thee any thing, do that which is contrary. What *Abraham* spake unto *Lot* in a way of condescension; that say thou to thy lusts in a way of opposition: *If thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou wilt depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left.* O my corrupt heart, if thou wilt have me speak, I will hold my peace; If thou wilt have me hold my peace, I will speak; If thou wouldst

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wouldst dispose me to mourning, I will rejoyce; If thou wouldst have me rejoyce, I will mourn and weep. Habituate thy self to practice contrary to thy corrupt disposition. Custom is a second nature: as they who have accustomed themselves to do evil, cannot do good; so they who accustom themselves to do good, will not find in themselves so strong a disposition unto evil.

ADMONITION VII.

Take heed of the Society of ungodly Persons.

R Eader, My design in this Admonition is not to transform thee into a Cynick, or to engage thee to such a dull retirement as is unsuitable to the humane nature. Far be it from me to endeavour by strength of Argument to drive thee (like *Nebuchadnezzar*) from men, that thy dwelling or converse should be with the

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Beasts of the field. All that I aim at, is that thou be awakned to a sense of that evil unto which a companion of fools (as *Salomon's* Phrase is) exposeth himself. Three Questions are here to be Answered:

1. Who are they that come under the notion of ungodly persons? 2. What is it to have Society with such? 3. What hurt is there in such Society?

Q. 1. Who are they that come under the notion of ungodly persons?

A. 1. In general, every one that is not turned from darkness to light; from the power of Satan unto God; is an ungodly person.

The Character of ungodliness is upon every one who is not renewed in the spirit of his mind by a principle of Faith and holy Obedience.

A. 2. But there are several sorts of ungodly persons especially, whose Society ought very carefully and heedfully to be shunned and avoided.

1. The haters of God, His ways and people: *Thy right hand shall find out those that hate Thee, Psal. 21. 8.* If there were not that hate God, His right hand could not find them out: *The haters of the Lord should have submitted themselves unto Him Psal. 81. 15.* In that black bill which is

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upon record, *Rom. 1. 30*, you will find *haters of God*; Again, The haters of the ways of God are above and beyond the common rate of ungodly persons.

Reader, There is a Generation of men that say unto the Lord, *Depart from us, we desire not the knowledg of thy ways*, *Joh. 21. 14*. We desire not, that is we hate, we loathe and abhor. *Lastly*, The haters of Gods people, are notoriously ungodly persons. I suppose it will easily be granted, that *Pharaoh* was one of the uppermost Scholars in the Devils School: Now one of the highest lessons which his Master taught him, was to hate Gods people: This is the account which the Psalmist gives of all that *Pharaoh* and the *Egyptians* did against *Israel*: *Their hearts were turned to hate his people*, *Psal. 105. 25*. There are a great many in the world who (though short of grace; yet) are naturally of so good a temper; and by Education have imbibed such ingenuous Principles, that they wish well to most with whom they have to do; but there are other who have the *poyson of Asps* or *Adders* under their tongue and in their hearts, *Rom. 3. 13*. They are not only gone out of the way themselves, but are also much embittered in their spirits against those

that are good: These are the persons (Reader) of whose Society this Admonition gives thee warning.

2. By the ungodly, I mean prophane, loose, dissolute persons, swearers, abusers of Scripture, unclean persons, drunkards, lyars, back biters, tale-bearers, envious and malicious, covetous, proud, censorious persons; *From these turn away*, as the Apostle admonisheth, *2 Tim. 3. 5.*

Q. What is it to have Society with ungodly persons?

A. 1. By Society, I do not mean a necessary co-habitation or dwelling together in the same Town or Family: *Lot dwelt in Sodom; Isaac and Ishmael, Jacob and Esau* were a great while under the same roof.

2. By Society, I do not mean civil Commerce; as buying, selling, &c. in the way of a lawful Calling: As we receive things for our outward accommodation from the earth; so it is not unlawful to deal for such commodities with men of the most earthly and carnal principles.

3. By Society, I do not mean eating and drinking in the company of ungodly persons, when the Providence of God calls us among them, or the courtesie of Neighbours inviting us to their Tables, joyns

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us (beyond our expectation, or besides our desire) in a civil communion with them.

4. By Society, I do not mean a civil deportment towards evil persons, or a giving them that outward respect which is due to their places, calling or condition: As we must walk wisely, so we must walk civilly towards them that are without.

5. By Society, I do not mean the assisting or relieving ungodly persons in their misery or necessity: The same Scripture which engageth us with an (Especially) *to the house-hold of Faith*; requireth, as our duty, to do good to all: If an enemy hunger, he must have bread; and if he thirst, he must have drink; yea, this is the way *to heap coals of fire upon his head*; that is, to thaw and melt him into a better frame of spirit.

6. But by Society with ungodly persons I understand three things especially.

1. An unnecessary, familiar, intimate, converse and correspondence with them.

2. A pretension (at least) to a delight, content and satisfaction in them.

3. A compliance (if not by words or actions, yet) by silence, with their ungodly speeches or practices: He that reproves not sin, is accessory to it, and a partner in it.

Q. What hurt is there in Society with ungodly persons?

A. Much every way, And that in a three-fold respect or relation : 1. To God. 2. To the sinner or ungodly person. 3. To the Christian that converseth with him.

1. It is evil to have Society or fellowship with ungodly persons, upon Gods account.

1. The voice of his word is not obeyed, He hath commanded by the Apostle, 2 Cor. 6. 17, *That we come out from among them, and be separate, and not touch the unclean thing*; which is not to be restrained unto Idolaters and their false worship (though that be mainly intended); but the words reach unto all the works and workers of iniquity. It is not possible to obey Gods Voice, and have Society with ungodly men. Again, 2. The Glory of God is much Eclipsed : It is a dishonour to the father when the son keeps leud company : Although God will at one time or other vindicate His own Glory ; yet, (at present) it casts a bad reflection upon His Name and Ways, when His people, His children and servants, are conversant with His enemies : It was an unanswerable Expostulation that of *Jehu* with *Jehosaphat*, 2 Chron. 19. 2, *Shouldest*

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thou help the ungodly, and love them that hate the Lord? q. d. What hath God done to thee that thou hast joyned with his enemy? What canst thou do more to the dishonour of God, than to help the ungodly, and to expresse thy love to them that hate Him? Reader, This is the case of those who professing Gods Name, do yet carry on an intimacy and familiarity with ungodly persons.

2. It is evil to have Society with ungodly persons upon ungodly persons account; for they are animated, encouraged and hardned in their wickedness by the company and countenance of those that be godly: Sure if I were so bad as some would make me (saith the wicked man in his heart), such and such men who are eminent for holiness, would not own me, nor keep me company as they do; some indeed speak against me, but others who make the same profession of Religion say nothing to me, but are well pleased with my company. O what an hardning is it to an ungodly person to have the countenance and society of those that are accounted godly! Reader, Think it not a small matter to have an hand in the eternal ruin of immortal souls: And truly thou canst not wash thine hands in innocency, if by
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thy familiar and intimate communion with them, thou strengthenest them in their evil way.

3. It is an evil to have Society with ungodly persons upon their own account who converse with them; and that for three Reasons:

1. Thou puttest thy feet into a snare, and exposeth thy self to those temptations by which thou art in great danger to be overcome; there is little hope thou shalt heat or warm thy ungodly associates; but there is a great deal of fear that they will cool thee; if thou canst not make them better, it is to be feared they will make thee worse.

2. Thou weakenest the confidence of thy most serious Christian friends, concerning the sincerity of thy Christian Profession: If a man be known by his companion, what account shall be given of those whose unnecessary converse is with ungodly persons?

3. That glory of thy profession of Religion must needs fade by thy keeping such company: As it is a disparagement to a Person of Quality to joyn himself in a way of Society with Pedlars or Ballad-singers, the offal and garbage of the people: So it is extremely dishonorable for a man that hath

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taken upon him an holy profession, to give the right hand of fellowship to ungodly persons.

ADMONITION VIII.

Take heed of falling off from good purposes and beginnings.

TH E whole world lieth in wickedness, saith the Apostle, 1 Joh. 5. 19, (*The whole*) that is, the greatest part of the world: And truly it may be said the whole world (*resolves*) to be in wickedness: *Because sentence against an evil work is not speedily executed, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil*, Eccl. 8. 11: The heart is set, fully set; they resolve upon it, like those obstinate and hard-hearted Jews, Jer. 44. 16, 17: *As for the word that thou hast spoken to us in the name of the Lord, we will not hearken unto thee: But we will certainly do whatsoever thing goeth forth out of our mouth,*

mouth, &c. This is that which the generality of people say in their hearts, though not with their mouths : And yet (Reader) there are some, who are sometimes in a better mind ; whose hearts (though for the most part they be like cages full of unclean Birds, yet) do now and then entertain serious thoughts, as the Barbarous people did *Paul* and his company after their Ship-wrack, *Act. 28. 2.* *Orpah* was at first as much resolved as *Ruth*, to return with *Naomi* her Mother-in-law unto her people, *Ruth 1. 10:* But after a while she kissed her Mother-in-law and went back, ver. 14, 15: The purpose and resolution of some for a time, is to give up themselves to Christ, and with that Scribe, *Mat. 8. 19,* They say to him Master, we will follow thee whithersoever thou goest: Yea, it is possible for some to set-out, and to make some progress in a spiritual course for a short time; and yet at last it may be applyed to them, which is spoken of some Disciples of Christ, *John 6. 66:* From that time many of his Disciples went back, and walked no more with him. Reader, As I would earnestly perswade thee to begin in the spirit; so I do as seriously admonish thee to take heed of concluding in the flesh: Take heed of falling off from good purposes

purposes and beginnings. To avoid confusdness in the management of the work which is before me, I shall, 1. Shew you what a good purpose and beginning is. 2. What it is to fall off. 3. The danger and mischief of such falling off. 4. By what means good purposes and beginnings may be confirmed and improved.

1. What a good purpose and beginning is.

A purpose is no other then the conclusion or the determination of the will concerning something to be done or forborn in time to come: In short, It is the hearts engageing it self to a prosecution or accomplishment of those thoughts which it hath received and entertained: Now according to the nature of the matter (among other considerations), so may the purpose be said to be good or bad. *Esa* purposed to slay his Brother *Jacob*, because he had gotten from him the Birth-right and the Blessing: This was an evil purpose, because the killing of a Brother was a great sin: On the other hand, *David* purposed to build God an House, which (because the work was in it self good), was a good purpose.

Reader, The good purposes to which the Admonition refers, are such as these:

I resolve to turn over a new leaf, to become a new man; to lay down the weapons of my hostility: I will walk no longer after the flesh, *lest I dye*: But I will endeavour through the spirit to mortifie the deeds of the flesh, *that I may live*. Again, a good beginning is not only a receiving and entertaining such thoughts and purposes in the heart; but also an actual entering upon such a way and course as is most suitable unto them, and hath a natural tendency to the accomplishment of them. When a man first *smites upon his thigh*, Jer. 31. 19; takes shame to himself, and enters upon a spiritual reformation of his heart and life; this may be said to be a good beginning. Now it is next to be inquired,

2. What it is to fall off from good purposes and beginnings? This falling off is either partial or total: 1. There is a partial falling off from good purposes and beginnings: And that is either when one who hath begun well, resumes a liberty to commit some sin, and to neglect some duty; or else is more cold, careless and remiss than he was wont to be, both in his affection and conversation. 2. There is a total falling off from good purposes and beginnings; and that is when they who have pretended

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to renovation in the spirit of their minds, and have seemed to be *new creatures*, fall from their own steadfastness, and return with *the dog to the vomit, and with the swine to the mire*. Balack thought, that is, purposed to promote *Balaam* unto great honour; but afterward his mind changed, and *Balaam* must stay no longer in his presence.

There is many a one who had it in his heart to give up himself to the honour and service of God, to put his neck under Christs Yoke, and to own Him for his Lord and King: But now the case is altered, he will not stand to his first resolution; but stands aside like a deceitful Bow: The wind is now turned, holiness is not now in fashion: The affliction which once lay heavy upon him is removed, outward advantages are before him; wherefore as a little child lets one thing fall out of his hand, that he may be capable of receiving another; so the hypocrite lets go Religion that he may enjoy his lusts; this is to fall off from good purposes and beginnings: And now my next work is to shew you (in the third place),

3. What danger and mischief there is in such fallings off: In the general, I may apply to all back-sliders, what God by the Prophet speaks to a revolting people,

Jer. 2. 19,

Jer. 2. 19, Thine own wickedness shall correct thee, and thy back-sliding shall reprove thee : Know therefore and see, that it is an evil thing and bitter, that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God, and that my fear is not in thee, saith The Lord of Hosts. More particularly and distinctly, Take notice that there are many great evils which will certainly follow upon a falling off from good purposes and beginnings: 1. Back-sliders are out of Gods favour; If any draw back, my Soul shall have no pleasure in him, Heb. 10. 38. 2. Good purposes and beginnings once lost, are very hardly (if ever) recovered: If the relapses of the body be dangerous, surely the relapses of the soul are much more dangerous: If one who hath escaped by breaking Prison, be taken again, he will be laden with more Irons, and more narrowly watched for the time to come. If one who hath broken away from Satan by good purposes and beginnings, shall be again seized by the powers of darkness, the latter state of that mans soul is like to be much worse than the first. There are some who seemed not long since to have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledg of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; but now they are again intangled therein, and over

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come: Now what shall we say of such? We must say with the Apostle, 2 Pet. 2.20, *The latter end with them will be worse then the beginning; for it had been better for them not to have known the ways of righteousness, then after they have known it, to turn away from the holy Commandment delivered unto them.* The Apostle Paul looked upon the *Galatians* as bewitched persons, because they returned from Evangelical to Legal services and performances; how much more are they bewitched, who after the entertaining of holy purposes, and some engagement in a holy practice; do return again to the folly of a sinful course? *We are not of them who draw back unto perdition*, saith the Apostle, *Heb. 10. 39.* Back-sliding is the way to destruction; the decay of natural heat in the body is the fore-runner of death: and the decay of spiritual heat in the soul exposeth it to the danger of eternal condemnation.

Q. By what means may good purposes and beginnings be confirmed and improved?

A. Let them not be undertaken rashly, but with mature advice and deliberation: My meaning is not, that it should be long before you resolve or begin to enter into the paths of holiness: It is well for them who can say with *David*, *I made hast, and de-*

delayed not to keep thy Commandments,
 Psal. 119. 60. It is high time to awake
 out of the sleep of sin : That which I aim
 at, is to prevent rashness and inconsiderati-
 on.

Confid. 1. The difficulty of the work:
 It is a hard thing to conquer sin.

Confid. 2. Your own insufficiency for
 such an undertaking.

Confid. 3. How difficult soever it is to
 be holy and spiritual, in heart and life ; and
 how insufficient soever thou art for the
 bringing this to pass ; yet a necessity is laid
 upon thee, and wo unto thee if thou be
 not holy ; *For without holiness no man
 shall see the Lord.*

A. 2. Be much in prayer, for that
 grace which is sufficient for thee : Every
 purpose which is sincerely good, is begotten
 of God ; it is from the over-shadowing
 of His Spirit : And as every good purpose,
 so every good beginning is from God : Now
 then pray, that he who hath begun this
 good work in thee, will perform it to the
 day of Christ.

A. 3. Look upon purposes, as nothing
 without performances. There are millions
 of persons reserved in chains under dark-
 nels to the Judgment of the Great Day,
 who had many good purposes in their
 hearts.

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A. 4. Consider the unreasonableness of a mans contenting himself with good beginnings, though there be no spiritual progression ; it is to begin to build, and not to finish ; it is to set forth for a Journey, and not to go forward.

A. 5. Be much in the Meditation of the great advantages which flow from confirmed purposes and improved beginnings.

1. If you be resolved, the Devil will be faint-hearted ; *Resist the Devil and he will flee from you.*

2. If you hold on after you have begun well, God will both assist and crown your endeavours : If you will not give over working, God will not give over helping you, till the top-stone be laid.

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To

To my dearly Beloved Friends
within the Burrough and
Parish of Banbury: Grace
and Peacc be Multiplied.

My dear Friends,

I have dispatch't the First Part of that task which I imposed upon my self, for your spiritual advantage: The things which I have hitherto written, have been for your admonition: And now before I proceed to the Exhortations which I have in store for you; I shall add one admonition more, and that is, That you take heed that all the preceding admonitions be not lost; I am jealous over you (my dearly Beloved), with godly jealousie, and cannot conceal from you that fear which hath surprized me, in reference to some of you: Give me leave I beseech you to deal friendly with you, forasmuch as a very great part of my comfort is bound up in the welfare of your souls.

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First, I fear that some of you have neglected to furnish your selves with Copies of what I have sent from week to week: I confess I apprehend not so much worth or excellency in any of my labours, as to render them accepted upon their own accompt: But yet considering how much you are concerned in the work which I have undertaken; and believing also that you are convinced of my faithfulness to your souls; it troubles me more than a little, that you are no more faithful to your selves.

Secondly, I fear that some of you have satisfied your selves with the reading of my papers, or the hearing them read; whereas it was both my desire and your duty to get them imprinted in your hearts: It is the folly and sin of many who name the name of Christ, and are numbered with the professors of the Gospel, that they deal with those counsels of God which are offered to them, as with flowers they gather in their gardens; either they stick them in their bosoms, or hold them in their hand for a day, and then lay them aside for ever: Spiritual things (my dear Friends), should be to you like choice slips of flowers or other plants; they should be set in good ground, and so ordered with care and diligence, that they may take root, grow and thrive for your spiritual profit and delight.

Is it not the desire of every one of you, that what you sow or plant in your gardens or orchards, should spring and flourish? And is it not infinitely more to be desired that your souls should prosper, and be like the field which the Lord hath blessed? Let me remind you of the 5th Admonition which you had from me: Take heed of idleness, laziness, slothfulness; especially in spiritual business: In all labour there is profit, Prov. 14. 23. And of all labour, spiritual labour is the most profitable: Other labour will bring in nothing but the meat that perisheth; but this will supply you with that meat which endureth to everlasting life: Only remember, that you must labour. There are many who can speak and write excellently concerning Husbandry, who yet cannot themselves thrive for want of industry. The talk of the lips tendeth only to penury, saith the same Solomon, in the forecited Scripture. Beloved, it will not be long before the Saints will have their harvest of happiness; take heed that none of you beg then, and have nothing: To prevent which unspeakable and everlasting misery, shake off your sluggishness, take the Plow into your hands, and begin with the fallow ground of your hearts: Husbandmen are supposed to be (ordinarily) the most healthful, because they take most pains: Sure I am, that nothing is more

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conducibile to the health of your souls, than to be much upon spiritual work; some of you have much leisure from the business of your callings: It is pity that so precious a thing as time should be wasted by sleep or idleness: None of you have so much to do, as that you can thereby excuse your selves from the serious and diligent prosecution of the one thing that is needful: If the world offers to set down in the highest room, when practical godliness (a much more honourable person) is bidden and invited; say unto it, give this man place, and let the world come down, and with shame take the lowest room. I deny not but diligence is required of you for the lawful improvement of your temporal interest; but also vigilance is necessary upon the account of that which is spiritual and eternal: If you did know and consider (my dear Friends) how little of the world will bear your charges to heaven, your care would be much less than it is; and if you were truly sensible how much grace and holiness you will need in your voyage to eternity, your care would be more. Now therefore gird up the loins of your mind, put on an holy resolution of being most intent upon, and most industrious about the things that are most excellent: Though I might be much bold in Christ to enjoin you that which is

not only convenient, but necessary; yet for
 love's sake I rather beseech you, being such
 a one as hath not cast off the care of your
 immortal souls, but longs to meet you all
 hereafter at Christs right hand: Yea (my
 dearly Beloved), let me have joy of you in
 the Lord; refresh my bowels in the Lord:
 Ye are none of you strangers to my sad con-
 dition; O let the report of your liveliness
 and activity in your spiritual work revive
 and comfort me: Ye are the people of my de-
 sires, and of my prayers; The Lord be un-
 to you all for good according to what is in the
 heart of

Your affectionate Friend
 and Servant in Christ,
 S. W.

EXHOR-

EXHORTATION I.

*Labour to be fully convinced,
and deeply sensible of the folly
and madness of sin.*

I Intend not (Reader) in this paper either to pourtray sin in all its parts and members, or to represent unto thee the folly and madness in all the symptoms or indications by which they may be discovered: All that I purpose in the whole, now under my hands, is, First, to shew wherein the sinner is like unto the fool or mad-man: Secondly, wherein he is more foolish and more mad. Among others, there are Six things from which folly or madness may be concluded.

1. It is great folly or madness to build an imaginary happiness where there is no ground or foundation; to say that a man builds castles in the air, and to say that he is a fool or mad-man; is of the

import and signification: Now that this folly or madness is to be found in the sinner, the Spirit of God hath determined, *Deut. 29. 19, I shall have peace (saith the sinner) though I walk in the imagination of mine heart; to add drunkenness to thirst.* Reader, a man may say with as much wisdom and soberness, I shall be cool in the fire, or dry in the water; I shall be rich though I squander away all my estate; or sweet and clean, though I continue wallowing in the mire and dung: as thus, *I shall have peace though I walk in the imagination of my heart: I shall be happy though I give my self up all my days to the service of my lusts, and do what is good in my own eyes.*

2. For a man to think that others see not him, because he sees not them; is a folly scarce to be found in any but children of a very small size, and of a short standing in the world; and yet this is the rate of the sinners folly: *Understand ye brutish among the people; and ye fools when will ye be wise? Plal. 94. 8.* But why brutish? And why fools? *They say the Lord shall not see, neither shall the God of Jacob regard it, ver. 7.* If the fool hath said in his heart there is no God, no wonder if he say also that God doth not see him.

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3. To do that which is un-fightly and irrational in the presence of honorable persons, is to proclaim folly or madness. *Achish* King of *Gath* had reason enough to think *David* mad, *When he scrabbled* (or made marks) *on the dores of the gate,* and *let his spittle fall down upon his beard,* 1 Sam. 21. 13. And what shall we say of the sinner, who pours forth his own filthiness, and foameth out his own shame in his presence, *Who is a great God, and a great King above all Gods?* So foolish is the sinner and ignorant, yea, *as a beast before God.*

4. For a man to proceed (after warning), upon that work which he must either undo again, or be himself undone, is folly beyond all excuse: Now this is to be charged upon ungodly persons, who persist and go on in those sins, of which except they repent (as they have been often told), they shall certainly perish.

5. He that tears, spoils, or throws away that which is of use and value, and can render no reason for his so doing, will have this judgment of folly or madness passed upon him by every one that passeth by him: Now this man is the Emblem of a sinner, who throws away precious time, or ordinances, opportunities, nor

regarding or considering *the things which belong unto his peace.*

6. He, who like him in the Gospel, *Mark* 5. 2, &c. dwells among *the tombs*, cannot be bound with chains and fetters, wounds and cuts his own flesh, is made even to the highest degree and rate of madness. Reader, Such a one is the sinner, whose conversation is with such as are *dead in trespasses and sins*; the laws of God do not bind or restrain him; *He breaks those bands asunder, and casts away those cords from him*, *Psal.* 2. 3. He woundeth, yea, he destroyeth his own soul: *O sinner, thou hast destroyed thy self*, *Hos.* 13. 9. Yea, of all fools and mad-men, the sinner is the most foolish, the most mad: For

1. Folly and madness are from the distemper and indisposition of the body, but sin is the corruption of the soul.

2. A man may be a fool, and yet rich, so was *Nabal*; and yet folly was with him: A man may be a fool, and yet healthy in a great measure; but the sinner is poor, the folly and poverty of the sinner are joyned together: *Therefore I said, surely these are poor, they are foolish*, *Jer.* 5. 4. Again, The sinner is a diseased creature: what is said concerning *Judah* and *Jerusalem* in reference to those judgments which

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which God had inflicted on them; may be applied to the sinner in a spiritual sense, *The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint; from the sole of the foot even to the head, there is no soundness in it, &c.* Isa. 1. 5, 6.

3. Fools and mad-men spoil and throw away only things temporal; but the sinner loseth that which is eternal: Now consider (Reader), and be wise; *Become a fool that thou mayst be wise*, 1 Cor. 3. 18. Let not sin seem a small matter in thy sight; they are the worst of fools *who make a mock of sin*: It was a good argument (though unsuccessful) which *Tamar* urged against her Brother *Amnon*, when he went about to defile her, 2 Sam. 13. 13, *As for thee, thou shalt be as one of the fools in Israel*: Wouldst thou be, or be accounted wise? Know, that *The fear of the Lord that is wisdom, and to depart from evil is understanding*, Job 28. 28. Reader, My prayer for thee is, that the only wise God will make thee wise to salvation: To this purpose be not wanting to thy self, but *hear counsel and receive instruction, that thou mayst be wise in the latter end.*

EXHOR-

EXHORTATION II.

*Get a daily improvement of your
knowledg of God, and of his
Will.*

REader, The knowledg of God, who is the most Excellent Object, will easily be granted to be the most excellent knowledg: This *David* was very sensible of, when he gives it in charge to *Solomon* his Son, *To know the God of his Father*, 1 Chron. 28. 9: Yea, our Saviour hath said so much, as to the advantage that comes by this knowledg, that nothing can be added: *This is life eternal, to know thee the only true God*, Joh. 17. 3. Nothing can be spoken more to the shame of any, or to expresse the wretchedness of their condition, than to say of them, *They have not the knowledg of God*: But where shall we find any persons so ignorant, especially in this *Land of Goshen*, in which (if any where) that promise is fulfilled which we read,

Isa. 11.9.

Isa. 11. 9, *The earth shall be filled with the knowledg of God, as the waters cover the Sea?* Indeed as to common actions, or such knowledg of God as is attainable by understanding the usual sense or signification of words; it may be applied to many, what the Apostle writes to the *Corinthians*, 1 Cor. 8. 1, *We all have knowledg.* But yet it is much to be feared, that such a knowledg of God, as is truly saving; and such a measure of spiritual knowledg, as is proportionable to the spiritual means which have been enjoyed, will be found in very few. That therefore which I have now to propose to thee (Reader), and to press upon thee, is, that thou press forward toward a full measure of that knowledg of God, and of His Will, unto the beginnings and lower degrees whereof thou hast already attained. Three Considerations will add much weight to the Exhortation.

Consid. 1. That the more a man knows of God, the more humbly will he walk with God: *He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good, and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?* Mic. 6. 8. Now though there is a knowledg which puffeth up, yet this knowledg (the knowledg of God) if it be clear and full, will prick the
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the bladder of thy pride, and let out those high thoughtss of thy self, with which thou wast (before) ready to burst: *I have heard of thee by the hearing sf the ear, but now mine eye hath seen thee*, Job 42. 6: As if he had said, Lord, my apprehensions of Thee heretofore have been rude and gross, low, and very imperfect: but now Thou hast caused much of thy Glory to pass before me, and I know Thee at an higher rate: And what then? See what follows, ver. 7. *Wherefore I abhor my self, and repent in dust and ashes.*

Consid. 2. That the more a man knows of God and of his Will, the more capable he will be of performing Gods Will. It is a great discouragement to an ingenuous servant, if he do not understand his Masters command; *Go ye* (saith Christ) *and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy and not sacrifice*, Mat. 9. 13. They, and only they are in a capacity to do Gods Will, who have learned what God means in all that he commands.

Obj. But what need I trouble my self, or be inquisitive about Gods Will? If I be ignorant, I hope I shall be excused; God doth not expect from me that I should do more than I know.

Sol. 1. Though sins of ignorance seem to

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be less hainous, yet that servant *which knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes,* Luk. 12. 49.

Sol. 2. Though God may wink at their ignorance, who cannot know His Will; yet wilful ignorance will render men utterly inexcusable: If ignorance be the child of negligence, it is just with God to punish it upon the Parents account.

Consid. 3. That the more a man knows of God, the more he will rejoyce in him: *Rejoyce in the Lord always, and again I say rejoyce,* Phil. 4. 4. Reader, Rejoyceing in God is a comfortable duty; but there is as much difficulty in it as in any thing that God requireth of us; and it is therefore difficult because men are not apprehensive of that Goodness and Excellency which is in God; as they who know Gods Name will put their trust in Him, so they who know His Name will rejoyce in him; yea, the more they know Him, the more they will rejoyce in Him: *The Kingdom of heaven (saith our Saviour) Mat. 13. 44, is like unto a treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field: It is a joyfull thing to any man to find a treasure* *more*

more or less; but when upon search, it appeareth to be a great and a rich treasure, it much increaseth the joy of him that finds it; the more he discovereth, the more he rejoyceth. Reader, The more thou diggest and searcest, and the more thou findest and discoverest of God, the more will thy joy be in him: Indeed fulness of joy, a joy of perfection, is not to be had any where on this side heaven: *In thy presence is fulness of joy*, Plal. 16. 11. But yet the joy of a believer, even here below, may be so much and so strong, that all the waters of affliction will not be able to quench it. He that knows God with that measure, or in that degree of knowledg which believers are capable of, and which many have attained unto, may give an account of himself in the words of the Prophet, Hab. 3. 17, 18: *Although the figg-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vine, &c. yet I will rejoyce in the Lord, and I will joy in the God of my salvation.*

Q. But how may a believers knowledg of God be improved?

A. 1. By a constant and diligent attendance upon Gods word: As knowledg in all Arts and Sciences is increased by reading and study; so an improvement in the knowledg of God, will be the reward of those

who

who make the word of God the matter of their meditation day and night.

A. 2. By Prayer: Open thou mine eyes that I may behold wonderous things out of thy Law, Psal. 119. 18. The Psalmist resolves upon Study or Meditation, ver. 15. And now he subjoyns Prayer; while David was speaking in prayer, Gabriel was sent to him to give him skill and understanding, Dan. 9, 20, 21, 22.

A. 3. By keeping to God in a way of holy obedience: If any man will do his Will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, Joh. 7. 17. Practice makes every Artist more skilful; yea, many for want of practice forget what once they knew: He, that imployes that Talent of knowledge which he hath received in a way of holy obedience, shall in due time be intrusted with a greater stock.

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EXHORTATION III.

*Let the Glory of God be your
greatest interest, aim, endea-
vour and comfort.*

MAKE the Glory of God your greatest interest; you have many concerns in the world, much business to do; your particular Callings must be followed, your selves and families must be maintained and provided for; you must be careful to preserve the health of your bodies, your credit and reputation. It is your duty to be serviceable in your generation to the publick, to be helpful to those who any way stand in need of you; but all these must be subordinate and subservient to the glory of God. When the Disciples moved their great Master to eat for the refecti^on or necessary refreshment of his body, almost tired out with pains and travel; He told them, *that He had meat to eat which they knew not of*, Joh. 4. 32: And
because

because they understood not that saying, he added, ver. 34, *My meat is to do the Will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work*: as if He had said, you think that I am much concerned in the supply of nature by taking corporal food, and indeed so I am, for (as I am man) I am liable to hunger and thirst, as well as others; but yet I judg, that to glorifie my Father by the accomplishment of His Will in the work which He hath put into my hands, is of a much greater importance. *Mephibosheth* concerned himself so much in King *David's* honour and settlement in his Kingdom, that his own Estate weighed but little with him, in comparision of the Kings advantage; *Yea, let Ziba take all, forasmuch as my Lord the King is come again in peace unto his own house*, 2 Sam. 19. 30. Reader, If God be glorified in thee and by thee, let it not trouble thee, though all that thou hast (below God) be taken away from thee. The spirit of the Wife of *Phineas* might possibly have born up reasonably well under the report of the death of her Father-in-law, and of her Husband; but when mention was made of the loss of the *Ark*, she quickly gave up the Ghost. Where her interest lay most, her dying-words will tell you, 1 Sam. 4. 22, *The*

glory is departed from Israel, for the Ark of God is taken. When *Hezekiah* spread *Senacharib's* Letter before the Lord, *Iſa.* 37. 14, to 21: He pleaded with God by prayer; and the main of his Arguments were,

1. That *Senacharib* by that Letter had reproached the living God, ver. 17.
- 2dly, The end of his Suit; to wit, That all the Kingdoms of the earth may know, that thou art the Lord, even thou only, ver. 20.

2. Let the glory of God be your greatest aim: Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God, *1 Cor.* 10. 31. There are many inferiour ends of eating and drinking, which are not only lawful, but necessary: *Paul* adviseth *Timothy*, To drink a little Wine for his stomach sake, and his often infirmities: But that which ought to be first and most in a godly mans eye, is the glory of God. I must eat and drink that I may be strong, and able for the work of God, that He may be glorified in me. It was a smart return which God gave by the Prophet to the enquiring Captives, *Zech.* 7 6, When ye did eat, and when ye did drink, did ye not eat for your selves, and drink for your selves? God may say to most in the world, by way of exprobration, ye eat and drink for your selves; ye work for your selves;

ye

ye buy and sell for your selves ; God is little in mans thoughts ; nay, it is to be feared that many who make a spiritual profession, are more for themselves, than for God, in all that they do. Now what shall I say to such ? shall I praise them in this ? I praise them not. Reader, Rouze up thy self to a serious examination of thine ends and aims in all thy transactions ; and while thou art upon this work, let not a deceived heart turn thee aside to a false judgment or determination. Let it humble thee to consider that thou hast hitherto shot at a wrong mark, and for the time to come pray earnestly, that not only thy ways, but also thine ends and aims may be so directed, that God in all things may be glorified.

3. Let the glory of God be your greatest endeavour ; *If a brother, or a sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them, depart in peace, be you warmed, and filled ; notwithstanding you give them not those things which are needful for the body, what doth it profit ?* Jam. 2. 15, 16. Reader, There are more then a few who deal even thus with God : I may say of many a one, what Jacob said of Naphtali, *He giveth good words, but the fruits of righteousness, which are to the praise and glo-*

ry of God, are not to be found upon him. It is good to speak good of Gods Name, but to act for His glory is much better; and to act vigorously and strongly for God, is best of all: *Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do (for God), do it with all thy might,* Eccl. 9. 10. When *David* spake to the Congregation concerning his preparations for the building of the Temple, 1 Chron. 20. 1, 2: He told them, *that the work was great, for the place was not for man, but for the Lord God;* and then he added, *Now I have prepared with all my might for the House of my God, &c.* Reader, If thou wilt glorifie God, do it with all thy mind, and with all thy strength. A portion of thy labour thou mayest, yea, thou must give both to thy self and others; but unto the glory of God, thou must give a worthy portion: let Gods mess (though not as to measure of time, or bulk of action, yet as to intention of spirit, and earnestness of affection) be five times as much as thou allottest to worldly employments.

4. Let the glory of God be your greatest comfort; the highest expressions of *David's* rejoycing, were always upon the account of Gods Glory. The report of the *Philistines* taking the *Ark* was so sad, that the Wife of *Phineas* (as was before
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intimated) could not bear it: The reason (as is supposed) was, because the enemies of God would now insult and blaspheme Gods Name: but when the Ark was brought back, *David, and all the House of Israel played before the Lord on all manner of Instruments, even on Harps and Psalteries, on Timbrels, Cornets and Cymbals, 2 Sam. 6. 5: Yea David danced before the Lord with all his might, ver. 14.* As no weight of affliction should be so heavy on a Christians spirit, as Gods dishonour; so nothing should raise his spirit to so high a pitch of comfort, as when God is glorified. *The Inhabitants of Zion have then most cause to cry out and shout, when the holy one of Israel is great in the midst of her.*

EXHORTATION IV.

*Resolve, enter upon, and persist
in every duty, how difficult,
painful, costly, or dangerous
soever it may prove.*

1. **B**Y duty, I understand whatsoever God requires of man, or whatsoever service or performance man owes: First, and immediately unto God. Secondly, To others. Thirdly, To himself.

2. Some duties are difficult, painful, costly, dangerous.

1. Difficult, by reason of inward corruptions, and outward temptations.

2. Painful, as they who run the race which is set before them, and undergo the burthens which are laid upon them, do daily experience.

3. Costly; Father, Mother, Wife, Children, Lands, Credit, yea, and Life it self (if need be), must be exposed in our great Matters Service.

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4. Dangerous : A Christian must work where the *Israelites* marched, namely in the Wilderness, where fiery Serpents and Dragons will be ready to bite, sting, and to destroy : *My soul is among Lions, and I lye even among them that are set on fire ; even the sons of men, whose teeth are spears and arrows, and their tongues a sharp sword,* Psal. 57. 4.

3. Duties must not be neglected, because they are difficult, painful, costly, or dangerous.

1. Not because they are difficult.

Consid. 1. That they are Duties.

Consid. 2. That all excellent things are difficult.

Consid. 3. That industry will overcome difficulty.

Consid. 4. That Gods Spirit will assist in difficult cases.

Consid. 5. That the more difficult any duty is, the more will a mans comfort be when he hath overcome that difficulty.

2. Not because they are painful.

Consid. 1. What great pains people take in the service of sin, and to destroy their souls.

Consid. 2. That the pains which the disobedient must suffer in Hell, will be infinitely more than the pains which they are

are required to take in the discharge of their duty: The unprofitable servant was unwilling to take pains in the improvement of his Talent; but it was unspeakably worse *to be bound hand and foot, and cast into outer darkness.*

Consid. 3. The pains will seem less and less, when a man hath gotten an habit of obedience.

3. Not because they are costly.

Consid. 1. God spared no cost to Redeem poor lost souls from Hell and destruction.

Consid. 2. That when a Christian shall cast up his accounts, he will find that those duties which cost him most, will be no loss to him: *And every one that hath forsaken House, or Brethren, or Sister, or Father, or Mother, or Wife, or Children, or Lands, for my Name-sake (saith Christ), shall receive an hundred fold, and shall inherit everlasting life, Mat. 19. 29.*

4. Not because they are dangerous.

Consid. 1. That dangers are commonly apprehended to be greater than they are; as the wicked, so the godly sometimes flee when none pursue them.

Consid. 2. That Christian courage never appears but in time of danger; even a coward will stand his ground when no enemy is near.

Consid. 3.

Consid. 3. That Gods promises of preservation refer to dangerous times and duties: *When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not over-flow thee; when thou walkest through the fire thou shalt not be burnt, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee,* Isa. 43. 2. Now then resolve, enter upon, and persist in every duty, and let not the difficulty, pains, cost, or danger fright thee.

1. Resolve, although nothing is to be undertaken rashly, or inconsiderately; yet too much deliberation is not to be admitted, lest action or performance be wholly neglected. Christian resolution will either remove blocks out of the way, or else leap over them.

But (Reader), that thy resolution prove not a snare to thee, take these three Cautions for thy security.

Caution 1. Understand the lawfulness, and expediency of that which thou resolvest upon.

Caution 2. Resolve not upon any thing in thine own strength, but let thine eyes be ever toward the Lord; remembering that it is His Grace, and only His Grace, which is sufficient for thee.

Caution. 3. Neglect not the probable means

means of accomplishing thy resolution, lest thou tempt God, and all thy good purposes fall to the ground.

2. Enter upon duties: The beginning is many times the hardest part of the work, it is like breaking the ice; but when that is done, a man may easily come at the water: The work that is well begun, is half done (saith the Proverb). It is possible indeed to find out that man who begun to build, and was not able to finish; but yet when the ground is opened, and the foundation laid, it is hopefully expected that the Structure will be compleated.

3. Persist in duty: The delight of Satan is to cause the work of God in the hand of a Christian to cease; and such is the weakness of the flesh, that a little thing will make it give over; but that thou mayst hold on in that holy course and practice in which thou art engaged,

Consid. 1. That thy great Masters eye is upon thee: Even eye-servants will work while their Masters look on: When God gives over seeing, then, and not till then, do thou give over working.

Consid. 2. That by intermitting thy duty, thou wilt provoke God to afflict thee: the horse that slackens his pace, and
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is ready to stand still, must have a whip or a spur to quicken him: If the hour-glass stop, and give over running, it is usual to shake it: God will not suffer his servants to give over, till their work be done.

Confid. 3. That every duty, which is sincerely and constantly performed, shall be rewarded. Reader, *So run, that thou mayest obtain: Be not weary in well-doing; for in due season thou shalt reap, if thou faint not.*

EXHORTATION V.

Get your hearts above all the profits, pleasures, and honours in the world.

THE Grace of God that bringeth salvation, Heb. 2. 11; teacheth to deny, not only *ungodliness* (that is, a lewd and licentious way of living), as in uncleanness, drunkenness, &c. but also *worldly lusts*,

lusts, which signifie the sinful and immoderate desire of, delight in, and pursuit or prosecution of the profits, pleasures, and honours which are in the world; now to deny these, is not wholly to lay them aside, as if they were not consistent with grace and holiness; but to deny them, is to get the heart above them: and the heart may be said to be above them,

1. When a man discovers and apprehends an excellency in other things beyond what he sees, or can believe to be in these. Earthly advantages are considerable things as they flow from God, and speak His bounty and providence, and as they are subservient to His Glory; but Faith says to a believer, what Christ said to *Nathaniel*, Joh. 1. 50, *Thou shalt see greater things than these.*

2- The heart may be said to be above all the honours, profits and pleasures in the world, when all these things cannot buy a man off from his spiritual and eternal interest, or ingage him in any thing contrary to the Glory of God, and the peace of his own conscience.

3. When the accession and increase of these things doth not lift a man up with pride, and make him more sensual; nor the want or loss of these things deject and dis-

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dispirit him ; he who with the Apostle, Phil. 4. 12, *knows both how to be abased, and how to abound ; both to be full, and to be hungry ; both to abound, and to suffer need* : That man hath gotten his heart above all the profits, pleasures and honours in the world : And now (Reader), what remains, but that I press the Exhortation distinctly ?

1. Get thy heart above worldly profits.

Motive 1. There is much pain and trouble in the purchase or procurement of them : *They that will be rich, pierce themselves through with many sorrows*, 1 Tim. 6. 10.

Motive 2. Worldly profits are dangerous snares to the precious soul : *They that will be rich, fall into temptations and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which draw men into destruction and perdition*, ver. 9, of the fore-cited Chapter : the more a man gets, the more is his danger of losing his soul ; *How hardly shall they that have riches, enter into the Kingdom of God ?* Mark 10. 23. *And what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul ?* Mark 8. 36.

Motive 3. Worldly profits are not able to give the soul satisfaction : *The eye is not satisf-*

satisfied with riches, Eccl. 4. 8. He that loveth Silver, shall not be satisfied with Silver; nor he that loveth abundance, with increase, Eccl. 5. 10. As Hell and destruction are never full, So the eyes of men are not satisfied, Prov. 27. 20. What the Lord speaks in another sense by the Prophet Haggai, Chap. 1. ver. 6, may be applied to most, yea, to all that feed upon worldly profits; Ye eat, but ye have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink; ye cloath you, but there is none warm.

2. Get thy heart above worldly pleasures,

Motive 1. They are very vanities; like childrens baubles, which a man will scorn and disdain: What a sad account doth Solomon give of all the pleasures which he prosecuted and enjoyed? Eccl. 2. 1, to the 12, I will prove thee with mirth, therefore enjoy pleasure; and behold, this also is vanity, ver. 1. I said of laughter, it is mad; and of mirth, what doth it? ver. 2. I got me men-singers, and women-singers, and the delights of the sons of men; as musical Instruments, and that of all sorts, ver. 8. Whatsoever mine eyes desired, I kept not from them; I with-held not my heart from any joy, ver. 10. But what was the result of all this? why, behold, all

was

was vanity and vexation of spirit, ver. 11

Motive 2. Worldly pleasures are commonly the foundation of much sorrow and misery: Reader, let me commend to thy most serious thoughts that of Solomon, Prov. 23. 31, 32; *Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, when it moveth it self aright; in the last it biteth like a Serpent, and stingeth like an Adder:* Look not upon worldly pleasures with desire and delight; for although at present they may gratifie thy lusts, they will hereafter sting thy conscience, and be like a talent of Lead upon thy spirit. A little earthly pleasure would serve thy turn, if thou wert truly sensible how much it will one day cost thee. Reader, the Lord help thee to believe, that spiritual pleasures are better than carnal, and heavenly than earthly: hast thou a right taste of this old wine, thou wouldst not desire new, for thou wouldst say the old is better.

3. Get thy heart above worldly honours.

By honours, I do not understand only great places, titles, and dignities, but also credit, respect, and reputation among men.

Motive 1. To affect honour and reputation from men, is to make it at least questionable,

tionable, whether the work of Falth with power be wrought in thee: *How can ye believe, which receive honour one from another? Joh. 5. 44. How can ye believe?* that is, how can ye make it appear that ye are believers? *which receives honour*; that is, which make it your business to be honoured by those with whom you have to do: It is true, *a good name is better than precious oyntment*; but yet a godly mans pursuit of honour in the world, is like a dead fly, which will cause his oyntment to send forth a stinking savour.

Motive 2. God is commonly honoured least, by those whom the men of the world honour most.

Motive 3. To be above worldly honour, is to be conformable to Christ, *who made Himself of no reputation.*

Motive 4. As the *sufferings of this present time are not*, so neither is the honour which is to be had here below, *worthy to be compared with the glory which shall hereafter be revealed.*

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EXHORTATION VI.

Be often and serious in the Examination of your own hearts and ways.

OF all the duties belonging to a Christian, the examination, searching, or trying of the heart and ways, is one of the most necessary, and yet the most neglected. That the Exhortation (therefore) may not be lost, I will First, (Reader) help thy understanding in the sense and meaning of the terms. Secondly, I will press the duty by Motives, Arguments. Lastly, I will give thee some Directions for the right performance of it. For the clearing of the terms, I shall give distinct Answers to three Questions.

Q. 1. What is meant by (heart)?

A. 1. The powers and faculties of the soul especially, the understanding and will.

A. 2. The passions and affections of

the soul, such as love, joy, desire, fear, anger, &c.

A. 3. The frame and temper, the movings and actings of those faculties and affections.

Q. 2. What is meant by (ways)?

A. The word (ways) is comprehensive of thoughts, words and actions; it refers to a mans course and practice, as to what God hath commanded or forbidden.

Q. 3. What is it to Examine the heart and ways?

A. 1. So to inquire into them, as to be able to give a true account of them.

A. 2. So to inquire into them, as to be sadly sensible, of all the evil that is to be found in them; to look upon all that is amiss, either in the inward or outward man, as sufficient ground of sorrow and lamentation.

A. 3. So to inquire into them, as resolving to fall presently upon the repairing of all breaches and decays in them; *I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy Testimonies, Psal. 119. 59: I thought on my ways*; that is, I considered (upon search and examination.) that my ways were not right, that I was out of the way; and this was no sooner discovered to me, but I endeavoured to conform my self in all

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all things to the straight rule of thy word. The terms thus Explained, let me press the Exhortation: Be often and serious in the Examination of your own hearts and ways.

1. Examine your hearts.

Motive 1. Consider that God takes special notice of the heart or inward-man: *Man looketh upon the out-ward appearance, but the Lord looketh upon the heart,* 1 Sam. 16. 7. *I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins,* Jer. 17. 10.

Motive 2. Consider, that if the heart be not right, God will not own or accept any outward performances whatsoever: *Eat thou not the bread of him that hath an evil eye,* Prov. 23. 6: and the reason is sub-joined in the next verse, *His heart is not with thee*: God will not accept of any of thy services, if thy heart be not with Him.

2. Examine your ways.

Motive 1. Consider that all your ways have a tendency, either toward Heaven, or towards Hell: *The hour is coming, in which all that are in the graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and shall come forth, they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation,* Joh. 5. 28, 29. Rea-

der, there are twins in the womb of this Motive : First, Heaven is too good to be lost ; Eternal life is not only an inexpressible, but also an inconceivable advantage : It concerns thee therefore to be found in the paths of life. Secondly, Hell is too hot to be endured : *Who among us shall* (that is, who among us can) *dwell with the devouring fire ? who among us can dwell with everlasting burnings ?* Isa. 33. 14. Now consider (Reader), if thy ways be not right, thy end will be destruction.

Motive 2. Consider, there are but a few in the world, compared with others, whose ways are right : when there is much bad money abroad, every one is strict in examining what he receives : How much more strict and exact should a man be in examination of his ways, which are (for the most part) greatly and sinfully corrupted ?

Q. How shall I search, examine, and try my heart and ways ?

A. 1. As to the examination of the heart, take these two Directions.

1. Consider the frame of thine heart as to uprightness and sincerity : What is it that I truly aim at ? Is it, that I may glorify God by a conformity to His Will in all things ? Are the desires of my soul to
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Gods Name, and to the remembrance of Him? Do I faithfully endeavour to get more acquaintance with Him? Does my will stoop, and submit to the Will of God in all things? Is God (indeed) the chiefest Object of my love, joy, fear, and trust?

2. Consider the frame of thine heart, as to liveliness and engagedness of spirit, in spiritual work: Do I mourn for sin bitterly? Do I give thanks for mercies heartily? Do I pray fervently? &c.

A. 2. As to the examination of thy ways, take these three Directions, or put these Questions to thy self.

1. Is my eye constantly upon the rule of Gods word? and do I labour to square all my actions by that rule?

2. Am I diligent in every business which God puts into my hand (especially spiritual business), neither omitting it, nor slightly performing it?

3. Do I forbear one sin as well as another? Is there an universality in my eschewing evil, and doing good? Now in this Examination of thy heart and ways, I shall commend three things unto thee.

1. Be often in the work; considering,
 1. That discontinuance will render the work more difficult and unpleasing.
 2. That often trial of thy heart and

ways, will (by the blessing of God) keep both within compass.

2. Be impartial in the work ; as thou must not call good evil, so neither must thou call evil good, no not in thy self.

3. Whatsoever fault thou shalt find either in thy heart or ways, put thy self upon a speedy and thorough reformation.

EXHORTATION VII.

Be. constant, fervent, and spiritual in secret Prayer and Ejaculation.

REader, I commend unto thee in this Exhortation, First, a duty. Secondly, the qualifications of the performance of that duty : The duty is expressed by two terms, referring both of them to the same thing ; the difference between them being small and circumstantial : By Prayer, I mean a more solemn and appointed address to the Throne of Grace : when a Christian (laying all other business aside),

sets

sets himself seriously to the work of pouring forth his soul before the Lord. By Ejaculation, I mean a more short and sudden lifting up the soul to God upon some emergent occasions, which Meditation, Observation, and Occurrences, will many times present unto him. In appointed Prayer, there ought to be a sequestration of a mans self from all other business and employments whatsoever; but Ejaculation is an interweaving of spiritual breathings of the soul, with such words and actions as are of an inferior nature and consideration; short Ejaculation is a kind of spiritual Parenthesis, distinct from, though assistant to any other work to which thou art called. While *Jacob* was blessing his Sons, *Gen. 49*, in the midst of his work (whether from a sense of his declining strength, or from a sudden motion of Gods Spirit, is not easie to determine), he breaks forth into this short Ejaculation: *I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord*; while a Christian is in his study, on a Journey, or about any business of his calling; while he is in company either good or bad, occasion will be offered, as of Observation, and Meditation, so of Ejaculation also. Reader, if thou meetest with knots and difficulties in the work which God hath put into thy hand,

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if thou feelest a dulness or dejection upon thy spirit, send up a secret request to heaven, and say, Lord help me, Lord quicken me, Lord strengthen me : If the Lord lift up the light of His countenance upon thee, and puts some gladness into thine heart, as thou art musing, or meditating on His Word, or Providences ; lift up thy soul to Him after this manner : Blessed be thy Name, O my God, for this comfort with which thou hast revived and refreshed my soul ; Lord let this taste of thy love remain for ever with me. And now (Reader), let thy heart be open to receive the Exhortation in two distinct Branches.

1. Be much in secret Prayer : *When thou prayest, enter into thy closet* (saith Christ), Mat. 6. 6, *and when thou hast shut the door, pray to thy Father which is in secret* : which words were uttered by our Saviour in a way of opposition to the Hypocrisie of some in those times, who loved to pray standing in the Synagogues, and in corners of the streets ; but withal they do imply, that secret prayer is a duty ; yea it is so essential to godliness, that where it is either altogether neglected, or seldom and slightly performed, a good account of the work of Grace cannot be given. To engage thee (Reader) to secret prayer, admit these

these Motives into thy most serious thoughts.

Motive 1. Consider, thou hast secret accounts between God and thee; there are secret sins upon thy account, the confession of which, the begging pardon of, and strength against which, can be performed no where so well, so safe, as in a corner, or secret place.

Motive 2. Thou hast received many personal mercies from God, to which others (it may be) are not privy; now as a publick acknowledgment of publick mercies, so a private and secret acknowledgment of private and secret mercies, is expected.

Motive 3. Every Christian hath some thing to ask of God, which he cannot conveniently mention before men, and therefore secret prayer is very necessary.

2. Be much in spiritual Ejaculation.

Motive 1. Consider, that at all times, and in all places, God is at hand, and can hear and understand the voice of thy heart, though thou speakest not with thy mouth. Indeed *Eli* thought *Hannah* was drunk, because *her lips moved when her voice was not heard*; but she answered well for her self, and God also gave her an answer of peace, for it was to her according to the desire of her heart, 1 *Sam.* 1. 19, 20. *Mo-*

Motive 2. Consider, that sudden Ejaculations are many times as suddenly answered, either in the settling and quieting the petitioners spirit, or in the actual accomplishment of what he desires.

Motive 3. Consider, that frequent Ejaculations awaken the soul to a minding of Gods Presence and Power, whereby it receives much comfort and encouragement. Although Prayer is properly a calling upon God, yet the experiences of his people tell them, that it also puts much life and warmth into their spirits.

Motive 4. Consider, that spiritual Ejaculations do much sweeten all conditions and imployments: As a good companion renders a mans work or travel more pleasant, so the looking up of the soul to God by Ejaculation, makes that which would be (otherwise) sad and burdensome, to become more easie and delightful.

Motive 5. Consider, that frequent spiritual Ejaculations, are good preservatives against sinful engagements; as they sin most who pray least; so on the other hand, they sin least who pray most.

Motive 6. Consider, that frequent Ejaculations are great improvers of acquaintance and communion with God; he that can say (with the Psalmist), *I am continually*

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ny with thee; that is to say, by Prayer and Meditation, will be (as it is said of *Abraham*) a friend of God; yea, and God will by His Spirit speak unto him *as a man speaketh to his friend*, *Exod. 33. 11.*

But while I am Exhorting to secret Prayer and Ejaculation, let not the qualifications of the performance be forgotten or neglected.

1. Be constant in the duties; it is one of the most certain signs of an Hypocrite, to wait upon God in the duty of prayer by fits and starts: When *Job's* friends laid hypocrisie falsely to his charge, they urged this as a proof or evidence against him, *Thou castest off fear, and restrainest prayer before God*, *Job 15. 4*; yea, *Job* in pleading his own integrity and sincerity, brings in prayer as a witness for him, *Job 27. 10*, *Will he always call upon God?* as if he had said, an hypocrite will not always call upon God, but I do; therefore I am no hypocrite.

Again, to press thee (Reader), to frequent prayer, let me mind thee of thy frequent wants and necessities: The truth is, thou art always wanting for thy inward or outward-man, and therefore there is reason thou shouldst be always praying.

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2. Be fervent in prayer: *The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much*, Jam. 5. 16. If thou wrestle with God as *Jacob* did, thou shalt also prevail as *Jacob* prevailed: If thou wilt not let Him go before He bless thee, He will bless thee before He goes: That thou mayst be fervent in prayer, consider the need thou hast of the things which thou art to pray for, things without which thou canst not subsist either here or hereafter.

3. Be spiritual in Prayer and Ejaculation; pray most, that is to say most fervently for spiritual good things; with such petitions God is well-pleased, and the return of such petitions will be most for a Christians profit and advantage. Again, be spiritual in prayer; that is, pray with the spirit: *With my soul have I desired thee in the night: yea, with my spirit within me will I seek thee early*, Isa. 26. 9.

EXHOR-

EXHORTATION VIII.

Let family-duties be daily, duly, and fully performed.

IF any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an Infidel, 1 Tim. 5. 8: If provision for a mans family, as to outward accomodations, be so necessary a duty; surely to make spiritual provision for them is much more necessary. The necessity of performing family-duties, ariseth from two Considerations,

1. As they are a homage due to God, the great Master of the great Family of Heaven and Earth.

2. As they refer to the advantage of a Christian-houholder, and of all that are committed to his charge. Upon the former account it was that *Joshua* took up, and declared that noble resolution, Josh. 24. 15, *As for me and my house,*
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we will serve the Lord: Joshua was sensible of the great things God had done for *Israel*; and as he and his were partakers of those benefits, so he thought it but just and equal, that both he himself, and all that belonged to him, should give up themselves to the worship and service of the God of their mercies. (Reader), If thou be the head of a family, take notice of all the family-mercies which God hath vouchsafed to thee and thine; and look upon them as so many obligations upon thee and thy house to serve the Lord. Again, family-duties are to be considered as so many spiritual Engines, which (if rightly used), are commonly very successful to the advantage of that family where they are performed. As the not calling upon Gods Name, puts a family under Gods wrath; so a sincere drawing nigh unto God in the way of His worship and service, is the way to make a family blessed. *Laban* fared much the better for one *Jacob*; and *Potipher* for one *Joseph*: Now if the godliness of one person in a family be of so great advantage to it; how well will it be with that family wherein every one joyns in the service of God! Reader, set up true Religion in thy family, and it will be to thee like the *Ark* to the house of *Obed Edom*; every way

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was a blessing. It is said of *Cornelius*, Acts 10. 2, *That he was a devout man, and one that feared God with all his house* : It will be a good evidence that the fear of God dwells in a house or family, when the service of God is the principal part of their work ; and if the fear of the Lord be there, *riches, and honours, and life*, are promised to them, *Prov. 22. 4*. And now, Reader, if it be worth the while to enjoy the presence and blessing of God in thy family, let family-duties be daily, duly, and fully performed.

1. Perform family-duties daily : As we are taught to ask of God *our daily bread* ; so it is but reasonable that God should have our daily service : What will become of my family if God doth not every day protect it ? How shall my family subsist, if God doth not every day provide for it ? Furthermore, It is to be observed, that as every room in the house doth daily contract, and gather dust and filth ; so every person in the family will some way or other, be every day defiled with sin : Now (in a subserviency and subordination to the holy, and holy-making Spirit of God) holy duties are the best means of sanctification. Reader, if sin be not daily committed in thy family, if there be not daily wants, ei-
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ther as to the inward or outward man ; if every day brings not mercy along with it, thou hast some excuse for the omission or intermission of family-duties ; but forasmuch as thou hast none of these things to plead for thee, take heed lest hereafter these things plead against thee.

1. Let the daily sins committed in thy family, engage thy family to a daily confession and humiliation, together with a joynt petition, that those sins may be both pardoned and subdued.

2. Let the daily wants of thy family, both of spirituals and temporals, send both thee and them every day to the Throne of Grace, that from thence (as the people of old from *Joseph's* store-houses in *Egypt*), ye may have a daily supply.

3. Let the daily beams of Gods favour and merey, in which He is pleased to shine upon thy tabernacle, provoke thee, and all under thy roof, to offer up daily sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving.

2. Perform family-duties duly :

1. In due time, and in the most convenient seasons ; *Job* rose up early in the morning to offer burnt-offerings, upon the account, and on the behalf of his Sons. Reader, assemble thy family before the Lord betimes.

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Consid. 1. That occasion of confession, petition, and thanksgiving, will anticipate your performances, and be ready before you, come together as early as you will.

Consid. 2. That whatsoever precedes or goes before your spiritual performances; is either service to Satan, or else to your selves: Now is it not all the reason in the world, that God should be served first?

Consid. 3. That you your selves are not pleased with those whom you employ, when they come late to work; and will God (think you) be pleased with you, when you come late to His service?

Consid. 4. That Gods blessing upon all your family-busines, is of so much concernment, that nothing can be hopefully undertaken without it; and therefore let your joynt address to God be your first family-employment; and as for your evening sacrifice, take heed that the hour of prayer be not at the hour of sleep; you cannot expect that God should awake to your help, when you your selves are not thoroughly awake while you beg help and mercy from Him.

2. Perform family-duties duly, that is in a due manner: as, First, by Meditation and Ejaculation prepare for your work. Secondly, Be intent upon the spiritual-busines

ness you have in hand. Thirdly, Come before the Lord with humility, in a deep sense of your own unworthiness. Fourthly, Exercise Faith, *without which it is impossible to please God*. Fifthly, Be fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.

3. Perform family-duties fully.

1. Read the Scriptures with some useful Observations from them, and with close Application of those Observations to the consciences of those who are concerned in them.

2. Take an account of those under your charge, as to their improvement in spiritual knowledg and understanding.

3. Be constant in prayer, and in that duty have a special respect to the present state of your family, as to their inward and outward infirmities and wants.

4. Let the high praise of God be carried on among you at convenient times, in Psalms, and Hymns, and Spiritual Songs fitted and suited (as near as you can) to those gracious providences and dispensations wherein the Lord doth appear to you.

EXHORTATION

EXHORTATION IX.

Improve your converse one with another, to your mutual, spiritual advantage.

NExt to communion with God, that converse which Christians enjoy one with another, is the most excellent privilege, and of greatest advantage: It was a sad complaint which *Heman* poured forth, *Psal. 88. 8, Thou hast put away my acquaintance far from me:* To be banished from the company and society of godly persons, is much like that sentence which was passed and inflicted upon *Nebuchadnezzar*, *Dan. 4. 32, They shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field:* He whose communion with Saints, is changed into converse with the men of the world, is certainly a great loser: It is much better to be with the children of God, though in the furnace of affliction,

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than to enjoy all the pleasures and profits in the world, in the society and fellowship of those that are ungodly. Reader, labour to get thy heart possessed with this great truth, and then be exhorted: 1st, To thankfulness for: 2^{dly}, To an improvement of this great mercy of society with godly persons. Now because an holy improvement of a mercy, is the best account which can be given of thy thankfulness for it, I shall insist upon the latter Branch of the Exhortation. To perswade thee (Reader) to endeavour this improvement, I shall lay three Considerations before thee.

Confid. 1. That the providence of God disposeth the co-habitation of Christians for their mutual good; that is to say, for the building up of one another in the most holy Faith; for the strengthening and confirming one another in grace and comfort.

Confid. 2. That the reason why Christians do not grow in grace, is (partly) because they neglect the improvement of opportunities of communion and spiritual converse one with another: As he that trades little or nothing in profitable commodities, cannot expect any great improvement of his temporal stock: so the

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who deal but little with other Christians in the business of their souls, cannot hope to thrive much in their spiritual estate.

Consid. 3. That an account will be required of the good which men might have done, but did not; and of the good which men might have received, but received not; the guilt of both which will appear to be the result of neglecting the improvement of spiritual communion.

Q. But how may spiritual communion or converse be improved to spiritual advantage?

A. By proposing, and observing some spiritual rules conducive thereunto. The rules to be proposed and observed, respect either such meetings of Christians as are occasional and accidental, or else such as are set and appointed.

1. Concerning occasional or accidental meetings.

Rule 1. When upon any occasion thou meetest providentially with any persons whom thou judgest spiritual, take notice of them, as of such persons; and conclude with thy self thus: The industrious Bee fastens upon every flower it comes to, and sucks Honey out of it; and why should not I make some spiritual advantage of the person or persons into whose company the

providence of God hath brought me ?

Rule 2. Whatsoever business is in agitation among you, be not satisfied with the civil dispatch of it, either by discourse or action ; but take occasion from thence to offer something of spiritual consideration. When one came to our Saviour (*Luke* 12. 13) to speak to his Brother to divide the Inheritance with him ; Christ took that occasion to admonish His Disciples to *take heed and beware of covetousness*. Suppose thy business (Reader) with some other Christians is to buy or sell, it will not at all hinder thee in that transaction, if now and then thou let such words as these drop from thee : Friends, it will be well with us, if while we are dealing one with another, we be sensible that Gods eye is upon us : Or thus ; We are good husbands for our outward man, oh that we were such for our inward also : or thus, we labour *for that meat which perisheth* ; how much more doth it concern us to labour *for that meat which endureth to everlasting life*.

2. Concerning set and appointed meetings.

Rule 1. Let private Christians propose to one another the frequent assembling of themselves together in convenient numbers,

bers, at convenient times, and in convenient places: *Then they that feared the Lord, spake often one to another*, Mal. 3. 16: It is not to be imagined that godly persons were so tumultuous, as either to disturb or interrupt those publick assemblies in which God was worshipped; but in a more private way, as providence gave them opportunities, they exhorted and provoked one another to a spiritual endeavour of keeping off from the polutions and corruptions of the times; of keeping close to God in all ways of holiness and obedience. Now inasmuch as it is said, that they spake (often) one to another, it is necessarily to be infer'd, that godly persons should be much and often together.

Rule 2. When Christians meet (especially as Christians), let not discourse about things temporal or earthly be admitted; but let it be the joynt-endeavour of every one to propose and prosecute that which is of spiritual concernment.

Rule 3. Let Christians at such meetings acquaint one another with the conflicts which they have had with spiritual enemies, and the procedure and issue of such conflicts.

Rule 4. Let an account be given (according to every Christians experience) of
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those conflicts wherewith God hath refreshed their souls, and of those remarkable providences in which God hath appeared to any of them.

Rule 5. Let serious admonitions, and soul-quickenings and awakening considerations be offered to those that are present, for the prevention of sin, and for encouragement in the ways of God.

Rule 6. Let counsel and direction be given to those that are in doubt; only if any speak in such cases, let them be sure that they speak as the Oracles of God.

Rule 7. In all Christian private meetings, let there be a conjunction of hearts, in an humble and sorrowful acknowledgment of sin, in earnest supplication for pardoning and purging mercy; and in offering up a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving for all the great things which God hath done, as for his people in general, so for that society in special, or for any of them in particular.

EXHORTATION X.

Walk wisely toward them that are without.

THY word (saith the Psalmist) is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path, Psal. 119. 105 : By this word we are directed, 1st, In our walking with God ; *Walk before me, and be thou perfect*, Gen. 17. 1. *What doth thee Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and love mery, and to walk humbly with thy God?* Mic. 6. 8. 2^{dly}, By this word we are directed to walk with good men : *Walk in love*, Eph. 5. 2. *Let us consider one another, to provoke unto love, and to good works*, Heb. 10. 24. 3^{dly}, By this word we are directed how to walk ; that is, how to deport or demean our selves towards them ahat are evil : *Walk in wisdom toward them that are without*, Col. 4. 5 : By them that are without, I understand evil men, who may be said to be without,

out, in many respects ; but especially upon the account of their not coming in unto Christ by Faith, and their not joyning themselves with His Disciples in the fellowship and obedience of the Gospel. In *Mark* 4. 11 : Christ distinguisheth His Disciples from the unbelieving world, thus : *Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the Kingdom of God : but unto them that are [without], all these things are done in Parables.* Now Reader, the design of this paper is to give thee some Directions for thy walking wisely, or walking in wisdom toward such persons.

Direct. 1. Imploy and make use of that spiritual wisdom and understanding which God hath given you for the instruction of those that be ignorant, that you may (by the blessing of God) be instrumental in turning them from darkness to light, from the power of Satan unto God : *He that winneth souls, is wise, Prov. 11. 30.* No man gives so good an account of his wisdom and understanding, as he who teacheth transgressors Gods ways, and by whose endeavours sinners are converted unto God : *They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, Dan. 12. 3.* Reader, if thou wouldst know who these wise men are, the next words will instruct thee ;

thee; *they that turn many to righteousness.* The wisdom of the poor wise man, *Eccl. 9. 15*, appeared sufficiently by his delivering the City; he whom the Spirit of God useth to pull men from sin and destruction, as the Angels pulled *Lot* into the house to them, when the *Sodomites* pressed upon him; he of all others may be said to walk wisely towards them that are without.

Direct. 2. Walk unblameably toward them that are without: The way to win sinners, is to give them good example: *Dearly beloved* (saith the Apostle, *1 Pet. 2. 11, 12*), *I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul. Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles, that whereas they speak against you as evil-doers, they may by your good works which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.* In these two Verses the Apostle perswadeth unto holiness of life and conversation; which he presseth by two Arguments: The former is taken from the danger to which fleshly lusts expose men, *they war against the soul*: The latter from the consideration of the great good which Christians may do by being good; they shall thereby provoke those *Gentiles* or *Heathens* who have formerly dishonoured God, *to glorify God in*
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the day of visitation. Of the same nature is the Argument by which the same Apostle perswadeth Wives to be in subjection to their own Husbands, 1 Pet. 3. 1, *Like-wise ye wives be in subjection to your own husbands, that if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives:* As if the Apostle had spoken more largely, thus: Indeed the condition of a believing wife, who is yoked unto an unbelieving husband, or one that is without, is very sad; but howsoever, let her walk in wisdom toward him; that is to say, let her by her free subjection, chaste and humble conversation, see if she can win her husband to the Faith; there is no greater block in an unbelievers way to Christ, than a disorderly walking of those who have undertaken a profession of the Gospel.

Direct. 3. Walk in wisdom; that is, walk discreetly toward them that are without. Reader, the discretion which I commend to thee, may be reduced to three Heads: 1. Be discreet in reprov- ing carnal or evil persons: discreet as to the thing for which thou reprovest them. 2. Discreet as to the time and season of re- proving them. Lastly, discreet as to the manner of reprov- ing them.

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1. Discreet as to the thing for which thou reproveſt; let it be clearly and unquestionably evil: The difference of another mans judgment from mine in things controverted, and not determined by the Scriptures, muſt not be charged upon him as guilt; although I may urge appoſite Arguments in a way of Diſputation, yet I muſt not condemn my Antagoniſt becauſe he is of another mind: He that reproveſ for that which he cannot prove to be a ſin, is little (if any thing) ſhort of a falſe accuſer. Again, be diſcreet as to the time and ſeaſon of reproveing: Firſt, if there be no neceſſity for thy more publick teſtimony againſt thy Neighbours ſin, deal with him when thou findeſt him moſt private. Secondly, reprove thy Neighbour when neither drink nor paſſion have ſo far tranſported him, as to render him incapable of thy faithfulness. Laſtly, be diſcreet as to the manner of reproveing thoſe that are without. 1^{ſt}, It will be thy wiſdom to inſinuate thy ſelf into the good opinion of him whom thou reproveſt, by a ſerious profeſſion of thy love to his perſon, and thy faithfulness to his ſoul. 2^{dly}, Let the reproof be rightly tempered: Reproof is like a plaifter, which if applied too cold, will not ſtick; if too hot,
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it will inflame the part, and vex the Patient.

2. Be discreet toward them that are without, as in reprovng, so in comforting or encouraging them : If thou hast to do with a carnal man in affliction, take heed of applying those promises to him of which he is not capable.

3. Walk in wisdom, or discreetly, toward them that are without, so as to take heed of being ensnared by them ; when thou sees a wicked man, look to thy self. Reader, I would not have thee fill thy head with needless jealousies ; but yet let me admonish thee of being over-confident of those men who are unfaithful both to God, and to their own souls.

To conclude, If thy estate, thy health, thy reputation, thy soul, thy God be dear to thee ; be very watchful and circumspect when thou art in the company of, or hast any thing to do with such as fear not God.

To

To my dearly Beloved Friends
within the Burrough and
Parish of Banbury : Grace
and Peace be Multiplied.

My dear Friends,

YOU have been Admonished and Exhorted: I suppose you are now in expectation of the performance of the Third Part of what I promised you, namely Comforts or Encouragements. The truth is, my ear is not more open unto, nor my heart more sweetly affected with any of Gods Commands, than when He bids me comfort His people. If the Lord saith unto me, as to the Prophet, Isa. 58. 1, Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a Trumpet, and shew my people their transgressions, and the house of Jacob their sins: *Merhinks I feel a reluctancy in my spirit, and a disposedness to put up the same petition which Moses did, when he did not like the errand*

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on which God sent him, Exod. 4. 13, O my Lord, send I pray thee, send by the hand of whom thou wilt send: *As if he had said, Lord let some body else go upon this errand. But if the Lord would please to employ me all my life long in carrying such messages as these,* Isa. 40. 2, 9, 10, 11: Speak comfortable to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned. Lift up thy voice with strength, and say unto the Cities of Judah, behold your God. Behold, the Lord God will come with strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him; behold his reward is with him, and his work before him. He shall feed his flock like a shepherd, he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young: *If (I say) it were my only work to bind up the broken-hearted, and to comfort all that mourn; I could never be weary of such employment; but our great Master puts variety of business into the hands of his servants; sometimes we must pipe, and see if people will dance after us; sometimes we must mourn, and see if people will weep with us: It is for the comfort of the Inhabitants of the earth, that they have some fair and Sun-shine-days,*
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that the Skie in not always black and lowring: It is matter of joy and rejoycing to the servants of Christ in the work of the Gospel, that they are not only to tell some, that Jesus Christ will be revealed from heaven in flames of fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; but they are also sent to others, as the Dove was to Noah in the Ark, with Olive-branches in their mouths. My dear Friends, my following papers will be like vessels laden with sweet Spices, and such good Oyntment, as by its savour shall cause you who are spiritual virgins, to love Christ in sincerity. I have in store for you such a cluster of Grapes, such Pomgranats and Figs, as shall prove unto you, that the Land of Canaan is a good Land. But before I open my treasure unto you, I must offer Five things to your Consideration.

Consid. 1. That God never intended comfort to any, but such to whom sin is an heavy burden: Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted, Mat. 5. 4. By mourning, you are not to understand the sorrow of the world, such as is in worldly men, or upon a worldly account, that sorrow causeth or worketh death, 2 Cor. 7. 10. But it is to be understood

derstood of godly sorrow, which worketh repentance to salvation, never to be repented of: *They who thus sow in tears, shall reap in joy; they, and only they, who so mourn, shall be comforted.*

2. *That spiritual comfort belongs to none that live in the love and wilful practice of any known sin: It may be said to such, what Jehu said to the messengers of Joram, What hast thou to do with peace? They who are alienated from the life of God, that is, from a godly life, they who are willing servants unto their lusts, and live after the flesh, must look for no other wages, but the wages of sin, which is death. This is all the comfort that such persons are capable of. Indeed there are some, who say in their heart, I shall have peace, though I walk after my own imaginations: But as he is a fool who hath said in his heart, there is no God; so he is likewise a fool, that blesseth himself in his wickedness, and saith in his heart, I shall have peace though I go on in a course of sin.*

3. *That if the comforts of the Gospel do not work upon you unto reformation, they will rise up in judgment against you to your condemnation. It is a comfortable Scripture, Isa. 55. 3, Incline your ear, and come unto me; hear, and your souls shall live;*
and

and I will make an everlasting Covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David: But now if any sinner shall with the deaf Adder, stop his ear, and refuse to hear the voice of this charmer, that refusal of his shall one day rise up in judgment against him: It was remembered against Israel, Psal. 106. 24, That they despised the pleasant Land; and it will be hereafter pleaded against many sinners, that they despised heaven it self, which was laid before them in the promises of the Gospel. Now they may be said to despise it, inasmuch as they accept not the tender of life and salvation upon Gospel-terms; namely, Faith and Repentance.

Conf. 4. Ye that are spiritual, That whatsoever comfort the Faithful Ministers of Christ promise you, God will perform and make good unto you: Indeed the Lord frustrateth the tokens of the lyars, and maketh diviners mad; He turneth wise-men backward, and maketh their knowledg foolish: but He confirmeth the word of His servants, and performeth the counsel of His messengers, Isa. 44. 25. 26.

5. That all that we can speak to the comfort of Gods people, will fall infinitely short of what they shall hereafter enjoy: The time will come, that they shall say of their com-

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*fort and happiness, what the Queen of Sheba
said of Solomon's wisdom and greatness,
One half hath not been told me. That you
may find it to your eternal comfort, is much
in the heart and prayer of*

Your faithful Friend and

Servant in Christ,

Sam. Welles.

COM-

COMFORT I.

This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners.

R Eader, I must now suppose that I have to do with persons to whom sin is a burden, and the fear of the wrath to come, a torment. This paper is (especially) intended for such as *labour and are heavy laden*; who from the deep sense and apprehension of their sin and misery, cry out with the Keeper of the Prison, *Acts 16. 30, Sirs, what must I do to be saved?* and with the Apostle, *Rom. 7. 24, O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?* If what I now write fall into such hands, I wish, and pray that it may also sink down into their hearts: The Apostles counsel which he gave to another, was, *Believe on the Lord*

Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved; and the comfort which he took to himself was, I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord: The sum of both is comprehended in the Scripture which I have prefixed: This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners: of this position a most excellent account is given by a double Elogium or Commendation, 1st, This is a faithful saying; 2dly, It is worthy of all acceptation. The former of these two confirms the position, the later applies it. Reader, I can hardly suspect thee (whosoever thou art) to be utterly a stranger to the doctrine of Salvation by Christ: The great question will be, Whether thou dost believe it, and close with it? For thy help in both these, my work shall be; First, To evince the faithfulness of this saying: Secondly, To perswade thee to a reception, or entertainment of it.

1. That Jesus Christ came into the world, cannot be denied by any who own the Scripture: *The word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the Only begotten of the Father, full of Grace and Truth, Joh. 1. 14.* Jesus Christ was prefigured and typified by the sacrifices under the

Law

Law, which were a shadow of good things to come; but the body was of Christ: *When the fullness of time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the Law, Gal. 4. 4.*

2. If it be enquired, wherefore God sent his Son into the world? 1st, Christ Himself, who is truth it self, gives an Answer, *Luke 19. 10, For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost. Yea, God so loved the world, that he gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believed in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life, Joh. 3. 16. For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved, ver. 17.* If these testimonies (with a multitude more upon record in Scripture) may be admitted (as well they may being dictated from Gods Spirit), then *this is a faithful saying, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners.* And now Reader, what remains, but that I woo thee, and (if it be possible) perswade thee to a closure with this doctrine, and to give it entertainment: If what thou hast read of the faithfulness of the saying, or position, be not enough to prevail with thee; let me press thee with the weight of what is further suggested
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and asserted; namely, that *this saying is worthy of all acceptation*. There are three things (among many others), which may strongly engage thee to receive the Gospel.

Consid. 1. That if Redemption by Christ be not accepted, no other sacrifice for sin can be offered upon the behalf of sinners; neither doth any thing remain, *but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation*.

2. That the Redemption which is in Christ, is a full Redemption; and that upon a two-fold account:

1. *He saveth to the uttermost all that come unto God by Him*, Heb. 7. 25. Many of the *Israelites* came near to the Land of Promise, and yet never entered in: but they who have Christ for the Captain of their salvation, shall not fall short of that Rest that remaineth to the people of God.

2. Salvation by Christ, is an everlasting salvation; even unbelievers are for a time reprieved from destruction: God dealeth with them, as Solomon with *Abiather*, *Go thy way, I will not at this time put thee to death*. The damnation of wicked men is respited for a time; and yet as God afterward destroyed those unbelievers whom He

He had saved out of the Land of *Egypt*; so at last the wicked, toward whom much patience and long suffering hath been exercised, shall be turned into Hell: But Christ gives eternal life unto His Sheep, and they shall never perish, *Joh. 10. 28.*

3. That the Redemption which is in Christ, is a free Redemption: Indeed it cost Christ dear, even His precious blood; but believers are saved by Grace: *The gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord, Rom. 6. 23. Ye shall be redeemed without money,* saith God to His people, *Isa. 52. 3.* It may be applied to eternal Redemption; Wine and Milk, that is to say, the comforts of the Gospel, and all the advantages of a Saviour, are offered to believers *without money, and without price, Isa. 55. 1.*

Q. But when may this faithful saying be said to be accepted?

A. 1. When this truth of the Gospel is believed; when the soul closeth with the promises of eternal life, as *Abraham* closed with the promise of a Son: It is said of *Abraham*, *Rom. 4. 18, 19, 20, 21, That against hope he believed in hope. And that not being weak in faith, he considered not the weakness of his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old;*

old; neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb. He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strong in faith, giving glory to God, &c.

Reader, there are many discouragements in the way of a believer : Gods Justice, and mans sinfulness (being clearly and fully apprehended) are enough to make any soul not assisted by a principle of Faith, to dispond and dispair ; but he who against hope believeth in hope, and maketh the grace and faithfulness of God the foundation of his confidence ; he who receiveth the Gospel as a faithful saying, may be said to accept it.

A. 2. The faithful saying of the Gospel may be said to be accepted, when not only the grace of the Gospel is believed, but also the duties of the Gospel are fulfilled and performed. *The Grace of God that brings salvation, hath appeared to all men, teaching us, that denying ungodliness and worldly-lusts, we should live righteously, soberly, and godly in this present world, Tit. 2. 11, 12.* He who expects to be saved by Christ, and yet continues in the service of sin, may be said to receive the Grace of God in vain : He who liveth *after the flesh shall die*, notwithstanding the Redemption which is in Christ, but he who makes it
his

his business, through the spirit, *to mortifie the deeds of the flesh, shall live.* It was not enough that the Elders of *Gilead* chose *Jephtha* to be their Captain, but they must promise, that if the Lord give them deliverance by His hand, he shall be their Head and Governour. He that takes Christ to be his King, as well as his Priest; he, and only he; may be said to accept the faithful saying of the Gospel. Now (Reader) if thy believing the Gospel be joyned with *repentance from dead works*, thou art in a safe condition. How many soever, how great soever thy sins have been, thou shalt not die, but live: *For this is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners.*

COMFORT II.

*Him that cometh unto Christ,
He will in no wise cast out.*

MAny and sweet are the Invitations by which poor souls are called unto Christ: And it is observable, that every Invitation is enforced by a promise, and every promise is like a weight or plummet, heavy enough to set the wheel of the affection upon motion.

1. Some promises comprehend the worth and excellency of that to which men are invited: *Wine and Milk*, Isa. 55. 1. *Ease and Rest*, Mat. 11. 28. *Gold tried in the fire*, Rev. 3. 28. *Yea, and eternal life*, Joh. 3. 15.

2. Some promises speak the truth and reality of those good things which are to be had by Jesus Christ: *My flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed*, Joh. 6. 55.

3. Some promises declare the plenty of that

that provision which Christ makes for his guests: *Eat O friends, drink, yea drink abundantly, O beloved, Cant. 5. 1. He that cometh unto Me, shall never hunger, and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst, Joh. 6. 35.*

4. Some promises remove the scruples of doubting souls, and dispel the darkneis of their gloomy spirits.

Object. 1. I have nothing to pay ; I am like many a poor wretch that is cast away because he cannot defray the charge of Physick ; I must starve, not being able to buy the bread of life.

A. Christ invites according to that rule that He prescribes, *Luke 14. 12, 13, When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor thy rich neighbours, lest they also bid thee again, and a recompence be made thee ; but when thou makest a feast, call the poor, &c.* Reader, Christ calls the poor to His feast of fat things ; yea, He bids them *come without money and without price.*

Object. 2. I am not fit to come to Christ, I am so filthy and unclean, I am so full of defeases, which render me loathsome and abominable ; I am like a beggar clothed with rags ; Is such a one fit to come into Christs presence ? *A.*

A. Christ calls the poor, the maimed, the halt and the blind, *Luke 14. 21.* As *Abraham's* bosom was prepared for poor *Lazarus*, so is Christs bosom ready to receive the poorest and meanest sinner ; yea, though thy soul be like *Lazarus* his body, full of sores, yet if thou comest to Christ, He will receive thee.

Object. 3. I know this call of Christ is a gracious call ; but I have a mis-giving heart, and I am full of fear that I shall not be accepted.

A. Take heed of charging Christ, who is truth it self, with falshood : *Believe His Prophets, so shall ye prosper, 2 Chron. 20. 20.* How much more ought Christ, the great Prophet, to be believed, when he saith, *him that cometh unto Me, I will in no wise cast out.* Indeed the time will come when the dore shall be shut, and then it will be to no purpose to knock, and to cry, *Lord, Lord, open to us :* But now while the Gospel is preached, I may say to the poor doubting soul, what the people that followed Christ, said to the blind man, *be of good comfort, He calleth thee :* Do but answer Christs call, and He will answer thy desires ; the gate of mercy stands wide open, and Christ is there ready to receive and entertain all
that

that come, whether they be *Jews* or *Gentiles*, there is no respect of persons with Christ. Reader, me-thinks all that I have laid before thee, should compel thee to come in; and yet all this is too little to prevail with most men: Christ may weep over many, as He did over *Jerusalem*, because they will not consider the time of their visitation; because they will not know, that is, accept in this their day, the things which belong unto their peace; *Ye will not come to Me, that ye might have life*, was Christs complaint, *Joh. 5. 40.* And He hath great cause to complain so unto this day. Christ calls, but people will not answer: He stretcheth forth His hand, but they do not regard. Of those who come not to Christ upon His gracious invitation, there are two sorts:

1. Some will not come to Christ, because of the difficulty of the terms which are propounded to all that will be His Disciples: they think it too much and too hard to deny themselves, to take up the cross, and to follow Christ: They cannot endure to put their necks under Christs Yoak, or to submit to His Government; they are contented that He should save them, but they will not have

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this

this man, nay, they will not have this God to reign over them.

2. There be others, who being conscious to themselves of their own unworthiness, are afraid that Christ will not bid them welcome: These are the persons to whom principally I intend this present Address. I have a full commission from Christ, to tell every such soul; that if he will come to Christ, *He will in no wise cast him out.*

Q. But what is it to come to Christ?

A. To come to Christ, implies a deep sense of thy misery: *The whole have no need of the Physician, but they that are sick,* Mat. 9. 12.

A. 2. To come to Christ, is to apprehend and believe His sufficiency: The Name of the Lord Jesus Christ is a strong Tower, run to Him, as to such a Tower, and thou wilt be safe: He that comes to Christ, must say to Him with the Leper, *Lord if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean*; and then Christ will return the same answer, *I will, be thou clean.*

3. He that comes to Christ, must come as Benhadad did to Ahab, 1 Kings 20. 34, *The Cities which my Father took from thy Father, I will restore, and thou shalt make the streets for thee in Damascus, &c.* He that

that comes to Christ, must speak after this manner: Lord, I have rob'd Thee of the glory which was due to Thee; thou hast purchased me with thy blood, but I have lived as if I were my own: Now (Lord) I will resign up my self to Thee; I will give Thee possession of my heart, and I will yield my self in a way of holy and sincere obedience to thy Commandments. Reader, do this, and thou shalt live: It is not enough that thou say it; words are but wind, which is sometimes in one corner, and sometimes in another; so say, and so do, and it shall be well with thee. As he that doth Christs sayings, so he that doth his own sayings, when they are such as these, is a wise man; yea, he shall be wise in the latter end: as Christ will own him here, so He will hereafter also: At the great day of Christs appearing, many shall be cast out, and have their portion with unbelievers, *in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone*; but they who now come to Christ by Faith and Obedience, shall then be *with him in Paradise*.

COMFORT III.

Godliness is profitable unto all things, having the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come,
 1 Tim. 4. 8.

AS there were of old, so there are many at this day, whose words are stout against the Lord. They say (at least in their hearts), *It is vain to serve God, and what profit is it that we have kept His Ordinances?* Mal. 3. 13, 14. Yea, so great are the discouragements of godliness in these evil days, that it is an hard matter, even for one that is godly, to be dumb and not to open his mouth, to speak in the language of *Asaph*, Psal. 73. 13, *Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocency.* But Reader, Go into the Sanctuary of God,

God, and thou shalt understand that *godliness with contentment, is great gain: That godliness is profitable unto all things.*

1. *Godliness*]

By godliness, the Apostle means a godly person; one *who is an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile*, Joh. 1. 47. A form of godliness, without the power of it, will not intitle a man to the comfort of this Text. If any one shall intrude into this feast, not having on the wedding-garment of Faith and Holiness, I must tell him, that the time will come, when the King shall say to the servants, *bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth*, Mat. 22. 13. As it is not meet, so it is not possible to take this childrens bread, *and to cast it to dogs*, so as to do them any good by it; they may catch at it, and swallow it, but it will pass through them, or else they *shall vomit it up again; God shall cast it out of their bellies*, as Zophar speaks of a wicked mans riches, Job 20. 15. But he that is in Christ Jesus, and *walketh not after the flesh, but after the spirit*; to him is this word of salvation as to the future, and consolation for the present, sent and directed: *Godliness is profitable unto all things, &c.*

2. *Is profitable*

The works of darknes are called *unfruitful works*, Eph. 5. 11. *What fruit had ye in those things whereof ye are now ashamed?* Rom. 6. 21. All the labour of an ungodly man, is for very vanity: What the Prophet speaks by way of complaint of the succesfulness of his Ministry, *Isa. 49. 4*: The same may the industrious carnal man say of all his careful and painful endeavours: *I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength for nought, and in vain.* But in all the labour of a godly man, there is profit. *Jacob's* service under his Uncle *Laban*, was very hard; in the day the drought consumed him, and the frost by night, and the sleep departed from his eyes: but yet his labour was well rewarded from the Lord; for he became exceeding rich. Reader, thou must not think to live idly in the Lords service; but yet take this for thy comfort, thy work shall be abundantly rewarded, *for godlines is profitable*

3. *Unto all things*

Godliness will direct and assist a man in his work: it will support him under burdens: It will teach him in whatsoever condition he is, *therewith to be content*: No person is so well accommodated for every

every imployment, and for every condition, as the godly person. The winter of affliction is not so cold and pinching to a godly man, as it is to another: If a man hunger, godliness will feed him; if he thirst, it will give him drink: It will bring him to Christ, *whose flesh is meat indeed, and whose blood is drink indeed*: If a man be naked, godliness will cover him; if he be sick and in prison, godliness will visit him: In short, godliness will make a mans life sweet, and will not suffer death to be bitter. Many things are good in some cases, but *godliness is profitable unto all things,*

4. *Having promise*]

It is enough for our happiness that God knoweth the thoughts which he hath, or thinketh towards us; when they are *thoughts of peace, and not of evil*, Jer. 29. 11. But it is more for our comfort that God hath spoken in His Holiness, and that a word of promise is gone forth from His mouth. Divine promises are strong consolations, forasmuch as they proceed from a God that cannot lye: They are the *sure mercies of David*: All the promises of God are *Yea*, and in Christ *Amen*: Heaven and Earth shall fail, but not one jot or tittle of Gods word

of promise shall fall to the ground.

5. *Of the life that now is]*

He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all; how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? Rom. 8. 32. That God who promised Abraham, that in his seed all the families of the earth should be blessed: Did also promise him at the same time, to make of him a great Nation, and to make his name Great, Gen. 12. 2, 3. Yea, He promised to give the Land, in which he was a stranger, to him and his heirs for ever, Gen. 17. 8. The promises of God comprehend the fruit of the body, of the ground, the cattel, and write a blessing upon the basket and the store, Deut. 28. 4, 5. Behold my servants shall eat, but ye shall be hungry; behold my servants shall drink, but ye shall be thirsty, &c. Isa. 65. 13.

A godly man is under the promise of the *life that now is]*

6. *And of that which is to come.*

Reader, thou mayst say to me, as the Governour of the feast said to the Bridegroom, Joh. 2. 10, *Thou hast kept the good wine until now.* The promises referring to the *life that now is*, are but the blessing of the left hand; when you have gathered them all together, you may hear God

God saying to you, as Christ to *Nathaniel*, *Behold I will shew thee greater things than these.* As things present, so things to come are thine. Reader, if thou art godly, what thou hast in reversion, is infinitely more than what thou hast in possession; What thou hast, is but temporal; but thou art promised that which is eternal. Now then, for the joy that is set before thee, endure the cross. *Blessed is the man that endureth temptation, for when he is tryed, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him,* James 1. 12.

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COMFORT IV.

It is the blessedness of them that believe, that their transgressions are forgiven, and their sins covered.

WHAT Solomon speaks of a fools wrath, Prov. 27. 3; may be applied to the guilt of sin upon an awakened soul: *A stone is heavy, and the sand weighty; but the burden of sin, is heavier than them both.* He who complains with the Psalmist, *My sin is ever before me*; will also say (with him), *Mine iniquities are gone over my head; as an heavy burden, they are too heavy for me.* He that knows by the experience of a wounded spirit what sin is, will easily believe that it is a blessed thing to have sin pardoned. Reader, I have two things to offer to thy consideration, the Proof and Application of which, will cause peace to rest upon thy

thy soul, if the Son of peace be there.

1. The transgressions of believers are pardoned, and their sin covered.

2. The forgiveness of transgressions, and the covering of sins, renders the condition of a believer blessed.

1. The transgressions of believers are forgiven, and their sins covered: If believers say, *They have no sin, they deceive themselves, and the truth is not in them,* 1 Joh. 1. 8. But if a believer saith with David, 2 Sam. 12. 13, *I have sinned against the Lord:* I will say to him in the words of Nathan in the same verse, *the Lord also hath put away thy sin, thou shalt not dye.* Wo (indeed) unto the wicked, it shall be ill with him, for the reward of his hands shall be given him, Isa. 3. 11. *His transgression it sealed up in a bag; God hath sowed up his iniquity,* Job 14. 17. And the time will come when he will set all his sins in order before his eyes: *But in those days, and in that time (saith the Lord), the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found; for I will pardon them whom I reserve,* Jer. 50. 20. As they who looked up to the Serpent of Brass in the Wilderness, were healed, and rescued from the jaws of temporal death; which

which (otherwise) would have swallowed them up ; so he that by Faith looketh up to a Crucified Saviour, shall be delivered from eternal death, which is the wages of unpardoned sin: *For his transgressions are forgiven, and his sin covered. Who shall lay any thing to the charge of Gods Elect ? it is God that justifieth, Rom. 8. 33.*

Q. How doth God justify?

A, By laying the iniquities of a believer upon Christ: *He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and with His stripes are we healed, Isa. 53. 5.* The debt of a believer in it self, is ten thousand Talents ; but God for Christs sake hath freely forgiven him all.

2. The forgiveness of transgressions, and the covering of sins, renders the condition of a believer blessed: *Your iniquities have separated between you and your God, Isa. 59. 2.* Sin is like that gulph of which *Abraham* speaks in the Parable, *Luk. 16. 26 ; Between us and you there is a great gulph fixed, so that they which would pass from hence to you, cannot ; neither can they pass to us that would come from thence.* Sin is a wall of partition between heaven and

and the sinner ; but to a believer, that wall (like the walls of *Jericho*) is fallen down, yea, so fallen, that it shall never be built up again. As a believer hath at present free access to the Throne of Grace, so he shall hereafter have free access to the Throne of Glory. Reader, produce thy pardon under the Great Seal of Heaven, and all that see it will rise up and call thee blessed. *God having raised up His Son Jesus* (saith *Peter*, Acts 3. 26.), *sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquity.* Believers are turned away, first, from the guilt of sin. Secondly from the practice of sin ; and upon both accounts they are pronounced blessed : *Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile*, Plal. 32. 1. It is an Emphatical Hebraism by which the Lord expresseth Himself to *Abraham*, Gen. 22. 17, *In blessing I will bless thee :* The phrase implies the certainty of the blessing ; as if he had said, I will most certainly, most assuredly bless thee. Reader, this is the blessedness of him whose transgressions are forgiven, and whose sins are covered : He is most certainly blessed ; *I have blessed him, yea, and he shall be blessed*, said *Isaac* of *Jacob*, Gen. 27. 33. He

to whom the Lord imputeth no sin, is blessed, yea, and he shall be blessed. The blessedness of a believer in the pardon of his sin, may be concluded,

1. From the freeness of the pardon: *Indeed all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God, saith the Apostle, Rom.*

3. 23: But the precedent and consequent verses are a comfortable discharge to believers: *The righteousness of God without the Law is manifested, ver. 21.*

Even the righteousness of God which is by Faith of Jesus Christ, unto all, and upon all that believe, ver. 22. To declare his righteousness for the remission of sins, ver. 25.

The debt of sin was a just debt, and a great debt; yea so great, that if man had been sold, payment could not have been made: but behold, our great Lord freely forgives us all; a believer is justified freely by His Grace.

2. From the fulness of the pardon: *Having forgiven you all trespasses, Col.*

2: 13. *Bless the Lord, O my soul, &c. who forgiveth all thy iniquities, Psal. 103. 3.*

3. From the fixedness of the pardon: The forgiveness of sin is a part of the everlasting Covenant which God hath made with his people, who shall never come into condemnation; pardon of sin is

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one of those *sure mercies of David*, which are promised, *Isa. 55. 3.* And now Reader, if thou art one of the children to whom this bread belongs, rejoyce in thy portion; eat this bread, and drink this wine with a merry heart. The reason of some mens sadness, is because they are in debt, they cannot eat, nor drink, nor sleep with comfort: could they but clear with all the world, they would think themselves happy. Reader, let them sigh whose sins remain upon the file; and who by sin are exposed to the wrath of that jealous God, who will by no means clear the guilty; but let beleivers rejoyce: If thou hast Faith (though but as a grain of Mustard-seed) thy sins (though as big as mountains) shall be removed: *Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God, Isa. 40. 1, 2. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned.* Reader, the ingemination of the first word, shews how intent God is upon the comfort of His people: Again, *Speak ye comfortably to* (or speak to the heart of) *Jerusalem*; Go carry this cordial to my drooping people. *Job* caused the widow's heart to sing: Oh how will the pardon of sin cheer the soul? *Be of good cheer, thy sins*

are forgiven thee, faith Christ; *Mat. 9. 2.*
 One thing more is considerable in that
 forecited Scripture; Cry unto her, that
 her warfare is accomplished, that her ini-
 quity is pardoned. [Cry unto her]: It is
 observable, that they who are under the
 spirit of bondage, and want an eye of
 Faith to look unto Christ, as to the Lord
 their righteousness; are commonly deaf
 as to all that is spoken to them for their
 comfort and relief: As wicked men turn
 a deaf ear to Gods Commands; so poor
 doubting Christians turn a deaf ear to
 Gods promises: But, as I intimated before,
 God is intent upon the comfort of his peo-
 ple; and if the work of Faith be begun in
 them, it will not be long before they shall
 have joy and peace in believing.

COMFORT V.

All things work together for good to them that love God, who are the called according to his purpose.

R Eader, I confess it is no easie matter to reconcile this promise unto all those dark and dismal providences in which God sometimes appears unto his people: That which I intend upon this Head of Comfort is,

1. To do what I can to dispel those dark clouds of Objection which interpose between the good Spirit of God in this Scripture, and the eye of a weak believer.

2. To perswade Christians in the worst of times and conditions, to cast every burden upon that God, who will make all things work together for their good.

Object. 1. If all things themselves shall work together for good to Gods people,

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How

How is it possible that any good should come out of sin?

Sol. 1. Indeed sin is the worst thing a man can name, as being most contrary to the holy Nature and Will of God; and also most destructive to our peace here, and our happiness hereafter: To do any evil of sin, that good may come, is a most dangerous enterprize or undertaking; but yet,

Sol. 2. The Lord doth oftentimes do His people good, even by those sins by which they are overcome.

1. He convinceth them of their weakness, by suffering them to fall; He makes them know that they are but men, that they are subject to passions and infirmities; that so they may not think more highly of themselves, than they ought to think, Rom. 12. 3.

2. He works them to a greater loathing and detestation of sin, by the experience they have of the sad effects of it in their souls; when a godly man hath been overtaken in some sin, and is awakened to a sense of it, he smites upon his thigh, and is afflicted with *Ephraim*, Jer. 31. 19: Like a Trades-man that hath been over-seen and over-reach'd in a bargain, his spirit riseth against his chapman, and he

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is relolved that he will never have any dealing with him as long as he lives. When a Christian considers how unfruitful those works of darkness have proved in which he hath been engaged; how deeply he hath suffered in the withdrawing of the light of Gods countenance, and in the disquietment of his own spirit with fears and terrors; the hatred with which he hates that sin, is more than the love with which he loved it.

3. He gives them a fresh taste of His pardoning-mercy, by which they are provoked to more love, thankfulness and new obedience, and made more watchful over their hearts and ways.

Object. 2. How can all things be said to work together for good to them that love God; when such persons are the greatest sufferers in the world?

Sol. 1. *All things* (saith Solomon) Eccl. 9. 2, *come alike unto all: there is one event* (as to temporal things) *to the righteous, and to the wicked; to the clean, and to the unclean:* Therefore (saith the same Solomon in the foregoing verse) *No man knoweth love or hatred by all that is before them.* Wicked men are sometimes as deeply ingulphed in temporal afflictions, as the children of God; though some of them

prosper in the world for a time, yet others drink as deep of the wrath of the Almighty, yea of that cup of astonishment which God puts into their hand, as any whatsoever.

Sol. 2. If there be little difference between the godly and ungodly, as to the matter of temporal sufferings and afflictions; yet the godly are upon much the better ground upon this account, That to them, and only to them, all things (and among the rest, afflictions) work together for good.

Q. What good do godly persons get by afflictions.

A. 1. They are awakened to a serious and profitable consideration of that Scripture-truth, *A man is born to trouble, as the sparks fly upward,* Job 5. 7.

A. 2. They are made further partakers of Gods Holiness: This is the fruit of their suffering, to take away their sin; *By this (that is by affliction) shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged,* Isa. 27. 9. *It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn thy Statutes,* Psal. 119. 71.

A. 3. Afflictions to godly persons are like Wormwood upon the breasts of the world, by which they are weaned from things below: There is nothing worse for
young

young children, than to suck bad milk ; and truly they who are always sucking the milk of earthly comforts and advantages, are seldom free from spiritual distempers : It is time for every Christian to be weaned from the world ; and for this cause God makes the world bitter.

A. 4. The suffering of the Saints in this world, put them upon strong desires, and the comfortable expectation of a better : Forasmuch as this world is not their rest (as their present sufferings do sufficiently assure them), they look after that better thing which God hath provided for them : *Heb. 11. 40.* Their hearts are much upon that *far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory* : And they look upon these *light afflictions, which are but for a moment, as not worthy to be compared with that glory which shall hereafter be revealed in them* ; Yea, they look upon the hottest affliction, but as upon that fiery Chariot by which *Elijah* was parted from his servant ; or the whirlwind by which he went up into heaven, *2Kings. 2. 11.* Now then, if afflictions make to clear and full a discovery of that trouble to which every man is heir-apparent : If they be Gods soape to cleanse the soul from the filthiness of sin ; If they be a

good expedient to take men off from sucking deadly poyson: Lastly, If they put men upon the desire and prosecution of future happiness, let it be granted that even afflictions work together for good to them that love God. And now, Reader, if thou lovest God, and art one of the called according to his purpose, let not the evil of the times wherein thou livest, drink up thy spirit, or make thee dispond: Indeed the evil of sin which thou seest with the eye, may well affect thy heart; if thou art so well stored, let Rivers of water run down thine eyes, because men keep not Gods Law.

Again, It is no Solecism or incongruity, if thou hang thy Harp upon the Willows, upon the account of captiv'd or persecuted holiness; but let not the loss of corn or wine, of peace or liberty, deject thee: Do not so much muse or ponder what men are doing, as what God is about: The time will come, when thou shalt be able to say to them by whom thou now sufferest, what Joseph said unto his Brethren, *Gen. 50. 20. As for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass as it is this day, &c.*

1st, It is not impossible for God to work

work out thy temporal good by what thou sufferest: If the providence of God strike thee like a ball to the ground, it may be by that dejection, thou shalt be exalted: *Joseph* (in probability) would never have been Ruler over all the Land of *Egypt*, if he had not been cast into prison. As the concussion, or shaking of trees by a strong wind, makes them more fruitful; so sometimes God recompenseth the sufferings of His people with outward advantages; and as a tree is laden with fruit, so are the suffering-servants of God with earthly comforts. Reader, hadst thou been with *Job* when he was stript of all his worldly comforts, thou wouldst have concluded him an undone-man beyond recovery; but behold, God turned his captivity, as the rivers in the South; his latter end was better than his beginning; yea, his fall was his rise, for his friends were so sadly affected with his poverty, that by their liberal presents they quickly made him doubly rich.

2. Sometimes God makes up temporal losses by spiritual gain; when riches, and honours are at a low ebb, grace and comfort do often flow and abound; when the outward-man (in any sense) decays, the inner-man is daily renewed.

Lastly, The afflictions of Gods people are oftentimes furtherers of their eternal happiness : as strong winds hasten the Ship toward the Port, so afflictions many times drive the Saints a-pace toward their desired haven : Death it self to them is no other than a dark passage to eternal life.

COMFORT VI.

God will not suffer his people to be tempted above what they are able.

THE Apostle *James* Chap, 1. ver. 2, seems to bind an heavy burden upon the scattered Tribes to whom he writes: *My Brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations.* Reader, canst thou imagine that there is any thing in troubles, trials, afflictions, which can ingratiate them to the children of men? Art thou not much in the mind of those *Philosophers*, Acts 17. 18, 19, 20, who not understanding *Paul's* Doctrine, called him to an account, and

and required satisfaction ; *For thou bringest certain strange things to our ears : We would know therefore what these things mean.* Indeed it is a rational counsel which *Solomon* gives, *Eccl. 7. 14, In the day of prosperity be joyful :* But if the providence of God leads us into trials and temptations, surely then it is a time to weep, and a time to mourn. Reader, I cannot but subscribe to the truth of what the Apostle writes, *Heb. 12. 11, No chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous :* But yet withal, I must tell thee, that there are such considerations proposed in Scripture to the serious thoughts of suffering-Saints, as (by Gods blessing) will make them think less strange, even of fiery trials, and to rejoyce even in tribulation. Among other cordials, let this which I now set before thee, be always by thee ; and whenever thy heart begins to fail, say to thy soul, *Why art thou cast down ? Why art thou so disquieted within me ? Trust still in that God who will not suffer his people to be tempted above what they are able.* There are Five sweet streams flowing from this Head of comfort ; it is pity that any of them should be lost.

1. [God] will not: *Blessed is the man that*

that maketh the Lord his trust, Psal. 40. 4. Indeed, *Men of low degree are vanity, and men of high degree a lye*, Psal. 62. 9. But if God undertakes for us, it is enough. Believers may boast in God all the day long: With others is an arm of flesh, which God can cause to wither when it is stretched forth, as he did the hand of *Jeroboam*, 1 Kings 13. 4. But with believers, is the Lord their God, who hath a mighty arm: *Strong is His hand, and high is His right hand*, Psal. 89. 13.

2. God [*will not*] suffer; Nothing comes to pass without Gods permission; The Devils could not fasten on *Job*, till God put him into his hand. A Christian may answer all the power that is raised against him, every danger that doth assault or threaten him, as Christ answered *Pilate*, Joh. 19. 11: *Pilate* wonders at Christs silence, *Speakest thou not unto me? Knowest thou not that I have power to crucifie thee, and have power to release thee? Jesus answered, Thou couldst have no power at all against Me, except it were given thee from above*: The world wonders that a Christian can be so silent when danger is before him; when men and Devils are in battel-array against him: Now the true reason is this: The Christian knows a Spar-

row cannot light upon the ground, nor an hair fall from his head without his Heavenly Father : And the interest which Gods Providence hath in all occurrences, keeps his spirit calm and quiet. Again, God will not [*suffer*] ; He hinders the execution of mischievous designs against His people, either in whole, or in part ; so that the weapons which are formed against them cannot prosper : *He disappointeth the devices of the crafty, so that their hands cannot perform their enterprise, Job 5. 12.* Though God suffered Satan to afflict Job, yet He laid His restraint upon him. He that stoppeth the windows of heaven, and can command the clouds that they rain no rain upon the earth ; can turn the course of any affliction, and keep His people in perfect peace.

3. God will not suffer [*His people*] , &c. *He that toucheth them, toucheth the apple of His eye, Zech. 2. 8.* Let [*my people*] go, that they may serve Me, was Gods message to Pharaoh, Exod. 5. 1. God is very tender of His people ; He watcheth over them night and day : *As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about His people, Psal. 125. 2.* The providence of God extends to all His creatures ; *O Lord, thou preservest man and*

and beast, Psal. 36. 6. But his people are His peculiar, Psal. 135. 4. Tit. 2. 14. Thou art worth ten thousand of us, said the people to David; when he would have gone in person to the battel, 2 Sam. 18. 3. Ten thousand of the ungodly of the world are not so much in Gods account, as one believer that fears His Name: It is much for the security of the Saints, that they are the Lords people.

4. God will not suffer His people to be [Tempted], &c. Indeed God sometimes tempts His people Himself; thus He tempted Abraham, Gen. 22. 1, 2. God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him: Take now thy Son, thine only Son Isaac whom thou lovest, and get thee into the Land of Moriah, and offer him there for a burnt-offering, &c. Fear not (said Moses to the Israelites, Exod. 20. 20) for God is come to prove you: That is, to tempt or try you. The afflictions which befall Gods people, are only to tempt, or try them; not to ruin or destroy them: Now I know that thou fearest God, said the Lord to Abraham, when he yielded obedience to so severe a command, Gen. 22. 12. q. d. I have now proved thee to the utmost; this obedience of thine hath abundantly demonstrated and evinced thy sincerity.

Object.

Object. But it seems very hard, that God who loves His people, should put them upon such fore tryals. Indeed it was no wonder that *Saul* put *David* upon desperate service, for he had a mind to be rid of him. And *David* himself commanded that *Uriah* should be set in the fore-front of the hottest battel, on purpose that he might be cut off: But will it consist with that tender care that God hath of His people, to expose them to those evils which threaten their destruction?

Sol. 1. Sometimes God calls His people to great sufferings, that (as was intimated before) he may prove and try them whether they be upright with him, and will adhere unto him.

Sol. 2. The sufferings to which Gods people are called, are not so dangerous as they are either by themselves or others supposed to be: for,

5. *God will not suffer His people to be tempted, above what they are able*]

Q. How can this be? *Is their strength the strength of stones or? is their flesh brass?* as *Job* expostulates, Chap. 6. 12?

A. God usually excuseth His weak servants from strong tryals: If *Jacob* had such respect to his tender children, and his

his flocks and herds with young, that he would not over-drive them: surely the God of *Jacob* will not oppress His weak people.

A. 2. If the strength of Gods people be small, God will increase it: When God calls His servants, either to do, or suffer great things; the weakest of them shall say, *I am strong*, *Joel* 3. 10. God will strengthen the weak hands, and comfort the feeble knees: He will say (and that effectually) to them that are of a fearful heart, *Be strong; fear not*, *Ila.* 35. 2, 3.

COMFORT VII.

As a Bridegroom rejoyceth over his Bride, so doth the Lord rejoyce over His people.

AS it is the duty of Gods people to rejoyce in God, *Rejoyce in the Lord always, and again I say rejoyce*, *Psal.* 4. 4. So it is the honour and comfort of Gods people,

people, that the Lord rejoyceth over them. When God speaks of the wicked and ungodly, He expresseth Himself at another rate, and by terms of a different, yea contrary import and signification: *I have no pleasure in you, saith the Lord of Hosts, Mal. 1. 10. Thou hatest all the workers of iniquity, saith the Psalmist, Psal. 5. 5.* When God first made the world, He took pleasure in the work of His hands, because all things were very good; yet afterwards, *When God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually; it repented the Lord that He made man on the earth, and it grieved Him at his heart, Gen. 6. 5, 6.* But there are some who are renewed in the spirit of their minds, who with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, 2 Cor. 3. 18. There are some whose cause Christ hath pleaded, whom he hath reconciled by the blood of His Cross: There are some who have Christ formed in them, who bear the image of the heavenly. Now these are accepted in the Beloved; In Him God is well pleased with them: He loveth them; He delighteth in them; He is married to them:
 Their

Their Maker is their husband; yea, as the Bridegroom rejoyceth over the Bride, so doth the Lord their God over them: Reader, there are Four Considerations deducible from this Head of Comfort, which I may compare unto that *Wine and Oyl*, Psal. 104. 15, the one of which maketh glad the heart; and the other, maketh the face to shine.

Consid. 1. That if the Lord rejoyceth over His people, then certainly He loves them: The joy and delight which parents have in their children, is the result of the natural love which they bear to them. Now the love of God, if understood and apprehended, will turn night into day, and fill the heart with joy and gladness: *Leah* comforted her self with this, *Now therefore my husband will love me*, Gen. 29. 32: *Leah* had but little room before in *Jacob's* affections; but now she hopes the case will be altered, and she remembereth no more the anguish of her travel, for joy not only that a man is born into the world; but also, yea especially because her husbands love is coming towards her. Reader, If God loves thee, He will be better to thee than ten sons.

Consid. 2. That if the Lord rejoyceth over His people, He will certainly do them good,

good. When God promiseth to bring His people back from *Babylon*, and to gather them out of all the Countries whether He had driven them in His anger, *Ier.* 32. 37, He adds verse 41, *Tea, I will rejoyce over them to do them good*: When God rejoyceth over His people, He will put them upon rejoycing also: *I will rejoyce in Jerusalem, and joy in My people, Isa.* 65. 19; and observe what follows; *and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying.* It was a good and clear demonstration of *Elkenah's* delighting in *Hannah* his Wife, and of his love to her: 1st, That he gave her a worthy or a double portion when he offered sacrifice at *Shiloh*. 2^{dly}, That he was so sadly affected with her sorrow, *Why weepest thou? And why wearest thou not? And why is thy heart grieved?* *1 Sam.* 1. 8. How much the heart of God is for good towards them in whom, and over whom He rejoyceth, appears, *Zeph.* 3. 17, 18, *He will rejoyce over thee with joy, he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing*: And then it follows, *I will gather them that are sorrowful, &c. Behold at that time I will undo all that afflict thee, and I will save her that halteth, and gather her that was driven out.*

O

Consid.

Consid. 3. That if the Lord rejoyceth over His people, they need not care though the men of the world hate them, and gnash their teeth at them: Gods love will infinitely more than counter-vail the worlds hatred. The *Egyptians* counted it an abomination to eat bread with the *Hebrews*, Gen. 43. 32 The godly are (of the world) accounted the off-scouring of all things unto this day; but let not that trouble them, seeing the Lord takes pleasure and delight in them.

Consid. 4. That the Lords rejoycing over His people, is a constant rejoycing. The Bridegroom may rejoyce greatly in his Bride for a time, and yet afterwards his love may cool, and his rejoycing may cease. We read of an hated Wife, *Deut.* 31. 15. It is not to be thought that men ordinarily marry those whom they hate; but many times it falls out (through corruption of nature) that she who at first was the desire of her husbands eyes, becomes afterward the object of his hatred and displeasure. But it is not so with Gods people; He loves them with an everlasting love, and rejoyceth over them with an everlasting rejoycing. The heart of God is fixed upon His people: *The Lord hath chosen Zion; He hath desired it for His*

His habitation, Plal. 132. 13: For His Habitation, for His dwelling-place, the place of His Residence; He hath chosen Zion, He hath desired it, He hath set His love upon it; and then see what follows, verse 14, *This is my rest for ever; here will I dwell, for I have desired it.* Reader, what is here spoken of Zion, of the Church in general, is true of every member of it; God hath chosen every believing soul, and hath desired it for His habitation; He loves it, He rejoiceth in it, and it shall be His rest for ever: Gods appearances in several providences and dispensations are but for a time, yea but for a moment; He *will not contend for ever, neither will He be always wrath*, Isa. 57. 16, *He will not keep anger for ever*, Jer. 3. 12, *He will not cast off for ever*, Lam. 3. 31: But He betroths His people to Himself for ever; His mercy and His loving-kindness shall be for ever; yea, and He will rejoyce over them for ever. Indeed on earth the inhabitants thereof may by sin so far provoke the eyes of Gods Glory, that He may justly turn their laughter into mourning, and their joy into heaviness; He may cause the voice of mirth, and the voice of gladness: the voice of the Bridegroom,

and the voice of the Bride, to cease : but the mutual joy and rejoycing between God and His people shall never cease. And now Reader, (if thou art a believer) may thy soul magnifie the Lord, and thy spirit rejoyce in God thy Saviour ; as the Lord rejoyceth in His people to do them good, so let His people rejoyce in Him to do Him service : *I delight to do thy will, O my God,* (saith the Psalmist in the person of Christ, *Psal. 40. 8*) : *yea, thy Law is within my heart* ; or in the midst of my bowels, as the words may be translated. Reader, if the works of God be thy delight here, thou shalt be happy in thy Masters joy hereafter.

COM-

COMFORT VIII.

*Whatsoever believers ask the
Father in Christs Name, He
will give it them.*

THere is no Christian duty to the performance of which there are more or greater encouragements, than that of Prayer: *God hath not said to the seed of Jacob, seek ye me in vain, Isa. 45. 19.* Reader, I am (how unworthy soever) an Ambassadour for Christ, to beseech thee in Christs stead to accept of an Invitation to the Throne of Grace: What He once spake in His own Person to His Disciples, *Mat. 7. 7*, the same do I say before thee in His Name: *Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.* Indeed there is a generation of men regard iniquity in their hearts, and therefore God will not hear their prayers: Yea, though they spread forth their hands, God will

hide his eyes from them; and though they make many prayers, He will not hear them, Isa. 1. 15. But though God heareth not sinners, Yet if any man be a worshipper of God, and doth His will, him he heareth: Yea, whatsoever such a one asketh the Father in Christs Name, He will give it him. Reader, My design in this (as in the former papers,) is to comfort thee; and in order thereunto, I here present thee with the Key of David, the Mediation of Jesus Christ, who is willing to be thy Advocate with the Father. With this Key thou mayst open the treasury of Heaven, and be filled with the fulness of God: Take Christ with thee, and then be it unto thee even as thou wilt: Is thy Oyl of comfort, like the Oyl in the Widows Cruse, little, and almost spent: Go to the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; Ask, and you shall receive, that your joy may be full, Joh. 16. 24.

Ask the Father]. Let your requests (thou prayer and supplication with thanksgiving) be made known unto God, Phil. 4. 6. It is to no purpose (saith the worshippers of Baal, 1 Kings 18. 26, 27.) to pray to an Idol, if we call from morning even until noon; yea, if we cut our selves with knives

knives and lancers, it will be in vain ; there will be no voice, nor any to answer us : therefore our prayers are to be offered up to no God, but to the God of Israel.

Again, *Ask the Father*] Methinks a child should be easily perswaded to go to his Father ; yea, though he hath been a prodigal, and be not worthy to be called his son, yet if he hath a returning-heart, let him arise and go to his Father. The Father of the prodigal saw his Son when he was yet a great way off, *Luk* 15. 20, yea, he no sooner saw him, but he had compassion, and run and fell on his neck and kissed him. All that the Son desired, was that he might be but as one of his Fathers hired-servants ; but his Father gives him more than he asks, he gives him his countenance, his love, sealed it with a kiss, puts him on the best robe, puts a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet, and entertains him with the fatted Calf. Reader, this is the very Father, into whose presence thou art invited ; and therefore be not afraid to ask the Father.

2. *In Christs Name*] Jesus Christ is the great Master of Requests : As there is no other Name by which we can be

saved, so there is no other Name in which we can be heard. If we should come before the Lord with burnt-offerings, with Calves of a year old; If we could come with thousands of Rams, or ten thousands of Rivers of Oyl; yea, if we should think to ingratiate our selves with God by offering up our first-born, or the fruit of our bodies to Him, notwithstanding all these we should not be accepted: The truth is, a great many send their prayers before them, as *Jacob* sent his present to *Esau*, Gen. 32, And if God should put the question as *Esau* did, Chap. 33. 8, *What meanest thou by all this drove which I meet?* What meanest thou by all those prayers which thou hast uttered, and those tears which thou hast shed? I say, if this should be Gods question, it is to be feared that the hearts of many would give this answer, *These are to find grace in the sight of my Lord.* But know (Reader) that all endeavours are lost where Christ is left out; as peace with God, so all mercy from God, is through our Lord Jesus Christ: *By Him it is that we have access by Faith into the grace wherein we stand,* Rom. 5. 2.

3. Believers. *Whatsoever believers ask the Father*] It is an easie matter to use
Christ

Christ's Name, as beggars do when they come to our dores; but it is not ~~the~~ naming of Christ (unless we believe on His Name) that will do us good. Reader, first give up thy self to Christ by Faith and Obedience, and then thou mayst use His Name to thy advantage. If thou art a believer, then

4. [*Whatsoever*] thy wants be, *Whatsoever thou shalt ask the Father in Christ's Name, He will give it thee: [Whatsoever]* It is our trouble and discouragement that we lye under so many wants; but it is our comfort that our God can, and will supply them all. *In Gibeon the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream by night: and God said, ask what I shall give thee,* 1 Kings 3. 5. Gods offer is not less to any believer: Wouldst thou have pardon of sin? Peace of conscience? Wouldst thou have thy daily bread? Wouldst thou have the blessing of the right hand, and the blessing of the left? In short, wouldst thou have thy spiritual, temporal and eternal interest secured to thee? All this the prayer of Faith can reach, all this the God hearing prayers will give; therefore lose nothing for want of asking: *Ye have not, because ye ask not,* James 4. 2-

Q. But how must I ask?

A. 1.

A. 1. Put up that petition which the Disciples did, *Luk. 11. 1, Lord teach us to pray*: Pray for that spirit of Grace and Supplication which was promised, *Zech. 12. 10.*

A. 2. Pray continually, without ceasing; be often at it.

A. 3. Pray earnestly: *The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much, James 5. 16.*

A. 4. Pray first and most for spiritual things: *Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done*; are placed (both of them) before *Give us this day our daily bread.*

A. 5. Pray in sincerity.

1. If thy petition be spiritual, let them be the very desires of thy heart.

2. If they be things temporal, propose Gods Glory in the use of them, and not the service of thy lusts.

A. 6. Add to every petition for temporal things, what Christ added when He prayed for deliverance from death; *Nevertheless not My will, but Thy will be done.*

COMFORT IX.

*Light is sown for the righteous,
and joy for the upright in
heart.*

Believers are in Scripture called *children of light*, upon a double account :
1st, The eyes of their understanding are opened ; the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ who is the image of God, hath shined unto them. 2^{dly}, They are heirs apparent to all true comfort, both here and hereafter : In this latter sense it is, *that light is sown for the righteous* : The light, joy and comfort, which belongs to the godly, may be considered as referring :
1st, To the life that now is. 2^{dly}. To that which is to come.

1. God intends joy and comfort to His people in this life.

1. The comfort of outward accommodations ; He hath said, *Verily thou shalt be fed*, Psal. 37. 3. *The young Lions do lack,*
and

and suffer hunger; but they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing, Psal. 34. 10. Manna shall fall from heaven, and water shall issue from a rock, rather than they shall perish by hunger or thirst: Although a godly mans portion be not in this life, yet he is under that Providence which will supply him with daily bread. What God promised His people, Dent. 28. 3, to the 14, is entailed upon all that shall hearken diligently to the voice of the Lord their God, to observe and to do all His Commandments: Blessed shall they be in the City, and blessed shall they be in the Field. Blessed shall be the fruit of their body, and the fruit of their ground, and the fruit of their cattel, the increase of their kine, and the flocks of their sheep, &c.

2. The comfort of preservation, and of deliverance from danger and affliction. A more black or thick cloud was never seen, than that which did hang over the Lords ancient people the *Jews* in the days of *Esther*, when *Haman* had plotted and contrived their destruction: *Letters were sent by post into all the Kings Provinces, to destroy, to kill, and to cause to perish all the Jews both young and old, little children and women, in one day, Esther 3. 13: But*

God

God disappointed the devices of the crafty, so that their hands could not perform their enterprise: The plot was discovered, the Letters were reversed, the enemies of Gods people were destroyed, and they were preserved. *The Jews had light and gladness, and joy and honour, Chap. 8. verse 16: They rested from their enemies, their sorrow was turned into joy, and their mourning into a good day, Chap. 9. verse 22.*

Object. But is it always so? Doth not the Psalmist say unto God his rock, *Why hast thou forgotten me? Why go I mourning, because of the oppression of the enemy?* Psal. 42. 9. Is it not said by way of complaint in the person of the Church, *Psal. 44. 22, Yea, for thy sake are we killed all the day long: we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter?* Is this the light, the joy and comfort which is said to be sown for Gods people?

Sol. 1. It is possible that people professing Gods Name, may be found walking contrary to God; and then it is no wonder if God also walk contrary unto them: If they tempt and provoke the most High God, and keep not His Testimonies; if they turn back and deal unfaithfully; if they turn aside like a deceitful bow, no won-

wonder if He also give His people over to the sword, and be wrath with His inheritance.

Sol. 2. Although the Lord may put His people for a time into a hot furnace of affliction, to convince them that it is an evil thing and a bitter that they have forsaken the Lord: Yet the rod of the wicked shall not always rest upon the lot of the righteous: *The Lord will awake as one out of sleep, and like a mighty man that shouteth by reason of wine, Psal. 78. 65.* God will in due time turn, for His people, their mourning into dancing, *He will put off their sackcloth, and gird them with gladness, Psal. 30. 11.* Let Gods people bemoan themselves for their sin, and turn unto the Lord with all their heart, and they shall see God going forth for the salvation of His people, *Hab. 3. 13.* Then will God appoint to them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oyl of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness, *Ila. 61. 3:* The heaviness of Gods people may endure for a night, but joy will certainly come in the morning; though they sow in tears, they shall reap in joy.

2. God intends comfort to His people hereafter, in the life that is to come:

Every

Every good and faithful servant of God shall then be sure to enter into His Master's joy. That which is said by way of promise concerning the deliverance of Gods people, *Isa. 35. 10*, refers only to a temporal enlargement and redemption; and that either from the *Assyrian* Invasion, or the *Babylonish* Captivity; but be it from the one or from the other, it is an excellent representation of the state of believers when they shall come to that rest that remains to the people of God: *The ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with songs; and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away:* They whom God hath redeemed from sin and death, from a vain conversation and everlasting destruction; they shall come to *Zion*, to Heaven the great Chamber of Presence, the Throne of Gods Glory.

They shall come with songs]

Though the songs of *Zion* were not to be sang in *Babylon* at the scornful motion of the enemies of Gods people; yet when they come to the true *Zion*, to the Royal Palace of the great King, their mouths shall be filled with laughter, and their tongues with singing.

Ever-

Everlasting joy shall be upon their heads]

They shall rejoyce for ever, their joy no man shall take away from them.

They shall [obtain] joy and gladness]

As he that runs best obtains the prize, and as he that fights manfully obtains the victory; so shall they who fight the good fight of Faith, lay hold on eternal life.

Sorrow and sighing shall flee away]

God shall revive the hearts, and wipe tears from the faces of His people. Indeed on earth there is, and will be a time to weep; but when the Saints shall be possessors of their heavenly Inheritance; as there shall be no more time, so there shall be no more tears. On earth joy and sorrow take their turns, one day is fair, and another foul: while the earth remains, cold and heat (as well in a bad sense as a good), summer and winter, day and night shall not cease: But in Heaven the Sun never sets, the light of Gods countenance will always shine upon the Saints without Eclipse or interruption. And now (Reader) what remains, but that thou first approve thy self capable of this comfort; and, secondly, that thou make use of it?

1. Approve thy self capable of this com-

comfort ; a stranger must not intermeddle with this joy : What *Nabal* spake churlishly, God will speak most justly, see 1 Sam. 25. 11, *Shall I then take my bread and my water, and my flesh that I have killed for my shearers, and give it unto men I know not whence they be ?* Shall I bestow the comforts of My Spirit here, and salvation hereafter (may God say) on hypocrites and ungodly persons ? It shall not be ; this is childrens bread, and none but children shall eat of it.

2. If thou be of the household of God, eat this bread of comfort by Faith with joy, and drink this wine of Consolation with a merry heart : Say of the joy which is set before thee, what Christ said of His approaching sufferings : *The cup which My Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it ?* Yea, I will take this cup of salvation, and praise the Name of the Lord.

COMFORT X.

God is a Sun and a shield unto His people; He will give grace and glory, and no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.

1. *God is a Sun*]

HOW excellent a creature the Sun is, the Psalmist hath told us, *Psal.* 19. 4, 5, 6: 1st, *His tabernacle is pitch'd in the Firmament.* 2dly, *As a Bridegroom he cometh out of his Chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race.* 3dly, *His going forth is from the end of the heavens, and his circuit unto the ends of it.* 4thly, *There is nothing hid from the heat thereof.* In all these, and many more respects, this glorious creature is a shadow of the infinitely more Glorious Creator.

Reader, There are three things which render the natural Sun excellent and desirable.

irable. 1st, His Light. 2^{dly}, His Heat. 3^{dly}, His generative or productive Influence. God is a Sun to His people upon all these accounts.

1. He illightens their understanding, and reveals to them what He hides even from the wise and prudent, Luk. 10. 21. *He who commandeth the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in their hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of God in the face of Jesus Christ*, 2 Cor. 4. 6.

2. God is a Sun to his people to warm and comfort them: *In the multitude of my thoughts within me, thy comforts delight my soul*, Psal. 94. 19. *I, even I am He that comforteth you*, Isa. 51. 12. As the Sun in the spring renews the face of the earth, and makes it look with a pleasant countenance; so the beams of Gods love shining upon the soul, will revive it, and fill it with joy and peace in believing.

3. God is a Sun to His people to make them fruitful. Naturalists speak largely of the Suns influence upon Vegetables in order to natural production; and most certain it is that if the Trees of righteousness bring forth fruit unto holiness, it is because they are influenceth them by His Spirit: *From the fruit of the tree is thy fruit found*, Hos. 14. 8. And (Reader) though thou must not (in

Job's sense), *behold the Sun when it shineth* that is, thou must not worship the natural Sun which is a creature : yet, if God be a Sun to thee, behold Him, behold Him (as the phrase is ingeminated, *Isa. 65. 1*) Behold Him with admiration, with adoration, with joy and rejoycing. And that thy joy may be full, engage thyself to a serious meditation of the happiness of all those on whom this All-creating Sun is pleased to cast His beams of Grace and mercy : *Truly the light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the Sun*, *Eccl. 11. 7*. But oh ! how much better is it to behold the light of God's countenance ! *In His favour is life*, *Psal. 30. 5*. Men may put thee where the Sun in the Firmament shall not appear unto thee : *But neither death, nor life, nor Angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come : Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate thee from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord*, *Rom. 8. 38, 39*.

2. *God is a shield unto His people*]

Happy art thou O Israel, who is like unto thee, O people, saved by the Lord, the shield of thy help ! &c. Deut. 33. 29. Indeed God's people cannot expect to be without enemies, they are increased that trouble them

any are they that rise up against them;
 Psal. 3. 1. The Archers sorely grieve
 them, they shoot at them and hate them;
 but God is their light and their salvation,
 their Sun and their shield, they shall dwell
 high; *their place of defence shall be the
 summits of rocks. Though they walk in
 the midst of trouble, God will revive them:
 He shall stretch forth His hand against the
 path of their enemies, and His right hand
 shall save them, Psal 138. 7.*

1. God will be a shield to His people
 defend them from the power of sinful
 temptations. He who kept the three chil-
 dren from serving *Nebuchadnezzar's* gods,
 and worshipping the golden Image which
 he had set up; will still preserve the way
 of His Saints, and keep their feet from be-
 ing taken.

God will be a shield to His people
 keep off that mischief and violence
 which is intended against them. Indeed
 if the Lord were not on their side when
 the wrath of men is kindled against them,
 they would be swallowed up quick; the
 waters would overwhelm them; the stream
 would go over their soul: But the right-
 eous Lord will cut asunder the cords of
 the wicked, and not suffer the weapons
 which are formed against His people to

prosper. Enemies may afflict for a time; but the rod of the wicked shall not rest upon the lot of the righteous. God will arise to judgment, to save all the weak of the earth; and then surely the wrath of man shall praise Him, and the remainder of wrath shall He restrain: *The Lord will bless the righteous, with favour will He compass him as with a shield*, Psal. 5. 12. *Therefore let all them that put their trust in God, rejoyce; let them ever shoot for joy, because He defendeth them.*

3. *He will give grace and glory]*

1. God will give His people favour in His sight.

2. He will give them favour and honour in the eyes of men. It was from God that *Esther* obtained so much grace and favour in the sight of *Ahasuerus*. *Esther* 2. 17. It was God that brought *Daniel* into favour and tender love with the Prince of the *Eunuchs*, Dan. 1. 9. *When a mans ways please the Lord, He maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him*, Prov. 16. 7. *He made his people to be pitied of all those that carried them captives*, Psal. 106. 46. When *Jacob* had wrestled with God and prevailed, he was easily admitted into his Brother *Esau's* favour: He who came forth in the prosecution

time; cution of an old grudge, and to slay his
 not rest Brother *Jacob*; when he saw him, ran to
 od will meet him, and embraced him, and fell on
 weak of his neck and kissed him, *Gen. 33. 4.* The
 rath of great present which *Jacob* sent before him,
 nainder was not it which did his work for him;
 ord will but it was God that made way for him,
 will He and caused him to find grace in the sight
 5. 12. of his Brother. And now having made
 ir trust mention of *Jacob*, let me add one instance
 for joy or example more; namely, the Son of *Jac-*
] cob, even *Joseph*, who was sold for a ser-
 vour in vant: He had no room in his Brethrens
 and ho hearts, nor was he suffered to abide in his
 s from Fathers house: It was moved that he
 grace let us slay him, *Gen. 37. 20.* but at last
 suerus it was concluded that he should be sold
 rought into *Egypt*, and that was accomplished,
 e with verse 28. But what becomes of *Joseph*
 . 1. 9. there? First, *Potiphar*, an Officer of *Pha-*
 d, He raoh, Captain of the Guard, an *Egyptian*,
 ce with bought him of the *Ishmaelites*, [Chap. 39. 1.]
 eople to *Joseph* was not long in his Masters house,
 em cap before he was admitted to his Masters
 b had favour; *Joseph* found grace in his sight,
 he was verse 4: But this fair weather lasted not
 Esau's long; his Mistress raised a storm, and poor
 profe *Joseph* suffered ship-rack upon a false ac-
 cution culation; he is laid by the heels; but God

is with him, shews him mercy, and gives him favour in the sight of the Keeper of the Prison, verse 21. Not long after this *Joseph* is (providentially) brought into *Pharaoh's* presence, and hath so much favour in *Pharaoh's* eyes, that the Kings Ring is put upon *Joseph's* hand, he is arrayed in Vestures of fine Linnen, a gold Chain is put about his neck, he is made to ride in the second Chariot; they before him, bow the knee: and he is made ruler over all the Land of *Egypt*, Chap. 41. ver. 42, 43. Thus God gave *Joseph* grace and glory.

4. No good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly.]

They that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing, Psal. 34. 10.

Object. There are a great many good things which never come within every godly mans reach. It was a large account indeed which *Abraham's* servants gave of his Masters Estate to *Rebeckah's* friends, Gen. 24. 35. The Lord hath blessed my Master greatly, and he is become great, and he hath given him flocks, and herds, and silver, and gold, and men-servants, and maid-servants, and camels, and asses. *Job's* Inventory also was very large, Chap. 1. 31. His substance was seven thousand sheep, and three

three thousand camels, and five thousand yoke of oxen, and five thousand she asses, and a very great household; so that this man was the greatest of all the men of the East: But every godly upright mans portion is not so great; nay, the condition of many (as to outward accomodations) is poor and necessitous: How then can it be said that God will withhold no good thing from them that walk uprightly?

Sol. 1. God deals with his servants (as to their outward allowance) according to the service in which He employs them. 1. He calls some to costly services, and therefore gives them a great allowance to bear their charges. 2. He will be glorified by others in their trials and sufferings, and therefore strips them of their clothes; that is, of outward comforts and enjoyments, that they may not be stopt or hindered in that straight and narrow passage unto which He hath appointed them. God will have passive, as well as active Obedience from his servants.

Sol. 2. Unless it be in the cases, and upon the occasions before alledged, the Providence of God in the supply of His Providence, and in furnishing them with comfortable accommodations, is very obvious and observable: Gods servants usually eat, and are satisfied.

Sol.

Sol. 3. Although there be many times a great difference between the people of God, as to the nature and measure of their outward enjoyments (some having more, and others less); yet it may be said of them all, as it is said of the *Israelites* in the *Wilderness*, as to the *Manna* which God gave them from heaven, *Exod. 16. 18*, when they did mete it with an Omer: *He that gathered much, had nothing over; and he that gathered little, had no lack: they gathered every man according to his eating.* The All-wise God dispenceth to all His children and servants such a measure and proportion of outward good things, as will be most conducive to the carrying on of His great designs, to wit, His Glory, and their salvation.

To

To my dearly Beloved Friends
within the Burrough and
Parish of B. Grace and
Peace be Multiplied.

My dear Friends,

THIS Fourth Epistle comes to you in
the Rere of those Admonitions, Ex-
hortations and Comforts with which my
weekly papers have presented you. And
now I am to let you know, that as I have
~~in much faithfulness to your souls, said~~
these counsels of God before you; so an
account of all these things will (one day)
be required of you. Beloved, my hearts
desire, and prayer to God both for my self
and for you, is, that is, that we may give
our account with joy. In order thereunto,
I have thought good to communicate unto
you a few Heads for Meditation, together
with some special Lessons and Observations;
the spiritual Improvement of which, will
much

much conduce to your comfort and happiness; which hath been, is, and shall be the desire and endeavour of

Your affectionate and faithful

Friend and Servant in the

Gospel of Christ,

S. W.

I. True

1. *True Wisdom.*

1. **C**arnal persons judg of their greatest wisdom to improve their interest in the profits and pleasures of this world: but he that seriously minds and prosecutes things spiritual and eternal, shall one day appear to be the wisest man.

2. *Behold the fear of the Lord that is wisdom, and to depart from evil is understanding, Job 28. 28.*

3. *He that heareth Christs sayings, and doth them, is like unto a man which built his house upon a rock, Mat. 7. 24.*

4. *If any reject the word of the Lord, what wisdom is in them? Jer. 8. 9.*

2. *Soul work necessary work.*

1. Men plow, and sow, and pursue the work of their outward Calling, because they must; doubtless to make sure of Christ, and of the eternal salvation of the soul, is much more necessary.

2. As the mouth of the body craveth bodily labour; so the mouth of the soul requireth spiritual endeavours.

3. *Spiritual labour and diligence.*

1. As spiritual labour is the most excellent, so it is of the most excellent advantage: other labour is rewarded with meat
that

that perisheth, but this with that which endureth to everlasting life.

2. Many take pains in the world, and lose their labour; but in all spiritual labour there is profit.

3. *In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat thy bread* (said God to Adam, Gen. 3. 19); and truly in the sweat of our souls must we eat bread in the Kingdom of God.

4. He that hopes to enter in at that straight gate which leads unto life, without striving, shall never sit down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the Kingdom of heaven.

4. *The ease and pleasure of spiritual work*

1. A carnal heart takes little pleasure in spiritual employments; but spiritual principles make it both easie and delightful.

2. Christs Yoke is straight and pinching before it is put on; and His burden intolerable before it is undertaken; but afterward, the one is easie and the other light.

3. Obedience to the Gospel is (to a carnal person) like the waters of *Marah*, *Exod. 15. 23*, of which the people could not drink, they were so bitter; but he that is godly makes a better judgment of Gods Word, whatsoever service it puts him upon: *How sweet are thy words unto my taste!*

yea,

yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth, Psal.
119. 103.

4. This is a hard saying, is the voice of an unbeliever when any Precept or Prohibition from God is laid before him; but to him in whom the work of Faith is wrought with power, Gods Commandments are not grievous.

5. *The mischief of spiritual slothfulness.*

1. As he that will not plow by reason of cold, shall beg in harvest, and have nothing; so he that will not plow up the fallow ground of his heart by examination and repentance, shall obtain no mercy in that harvest which will be at the end of the world, when Jesus Christ shall come to Judgment.

2. *By slothfulness the building decayeth, and the house droppeth thorough,* Eccl. 10. 18. Spiritual slothfulness exposeth both soul and body to eternal ruin and destruction.

6. *Good purposes or resolutions.*

1. Good purposes well rooted, will in due time bring forth good practices.

2. He that resolves well, and doth not prosecute that resolution; will find himself further off from that good he intended, than he was before he resolved.

3. As

3. As an holy resolution is the motion of Gods Spirit, so it must be prosecuted in Gods strength.

4. Good purposes are commonly assaulted by inward corruptions, and outward temptations; therefore he that resolves well, must also resolve that nothing shall hinder him.

5. Where there is not a principle of self-denial, good purposes signifie nothing.

7. *Change of the heart.*

1. When the heart is evil, it is not possible that a mans thoughts, words or actions should be truly good; the streams must needs be unclean, if the fountain be corrupt.

2. If the inner-man be changed, the outward man will quickly be reformed.

3. He that would be (like *David*) a man after Gods heart, must pray as *David* did, *Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.*

8. *Humiliation.*

As I must be humbled for the sin of my practice, so also for the sin of my nature; *behold I was shapen in iniquity; and deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O God; must go together.*

9. *Reformation.*

1. No man is truly and rightly humbled for

for sin, that does not immediately, earnestly and stedfastly strive against it.

2. Not he that only confesseth, but he that confesseth and forsaketh his sins, shall find mercy. *Wash ye, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes: cease to do evil, learn to do well, &c.* Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord. Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow: though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool, Isa. 1. 16, 17, 18.

10. Spiritual watchfulness.

1. As for want of strict watching and warding, robberies are committed; so the Devil and corruption takes advantage by our negligence.

2. It is while men sleep that the enemy soweth tares; when we are thoroughly awake, we find not more cause to complain of Satan, than our selves.

3. If the Devil watcheth for our destruction, we have a great deal of reason to watch for our own preservation.

4. It is not enough that we our selves watch; but we must also commit our selves to the watchman of Israel, that never slumbereth nor sleepeth.

5. Sobriety is necessary unto watchfulness; if the profits and pleasures of the world

Soul

world intoxicate us, we shall quickly be asleep.

6. Corruptions and temptations (as one faith) give us no warning; let us be always upon our watch, and then we shall give them no advantage.

Special Lessons and Observations.

1. **E**ndeavour, that the truth of your renewed spiritual estate may be more and more clear and certain; you cannot give too much diligence to *make your calling and election sure.*

2. When you are well satisfied that you have layd a good foundation, let your daily care and endeavour be for your spiritual superstruction and improvement: He is not at all truly good, that does not labour to be better.

3. Prayer, reading, meditation and conference, will (by the blessing of God) add much to your spiritual stature.

4. As you must be fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; so also in the prosecution of the great business of your soul.

5. Take special notice of those sins and weaknesses to which you find your self most prone, and disposed; have them often in your eye, that (by the blessing of the

the spirit) your eye may affect your heart.

6. Let the discovery of your weaknesses and infirmities, make you humble, fervent in prayer, and watchful.

7. Let not the good thoughts, desires and purposes which you sometimes conceive, cheat you into a belief that your heart is not deceitful.

8. Take special notice, that whensoever you renew your repentance, the Devil will renew his temptations.

9. Consider, that Satans temptations would little prevail, if it were not for our own corruptions; and therefore

10. The best way of resisting the Devil, is to subdue our own lusts:

11. If you would have the comfortable assurance of your own sincerity, put your selves often upon duties of difficulty.

12. Consider seriously what duties you find most difficult; and then engage your self in prayer and praise, and so they will become easie and familiar.

13. In all your spiritual performances, whatsoever you find of sin or weakness, charge it upon your self; whatsoever of strength or holiness, ascribe it to Christ.

14. Take heed of being overcome twice by one temptation, for that will aggravate

vate your sin, and you will be more hardly recovered; the second error is always worse than the first.

15. Never yield to the unwillingness of your spirit, so far as to omit any duty which God requires; but set about it, though flesh and corruption plead against it.

16. It is a clear demonstration of a spiritual condition, when in the conflicts which are in the soul between flesh and spirit, the spirit usually gets the victory.

17. To love Grace best, and to hate sin most, are unquestionable evidences of spiritual uprightness and integrity.

18. If you would live comfortably all your days, be in continual communion with God.

19. Ignorance, unbelief, and earthly-mindedness do (above all things) estrange the soul from God.

20. The profits and pleasures of this world, are to our corrupted souls, like sticking plaisters to ulcerated bodies, which cannot be pull'd off without pain.

21. As the foulness of the body through peccant humours, causeth pain and sickness in the working of physick; so the trouble of the spirit under crosses and afflictions, is the result of those filthy lusts which
are

are in, and war against the soul.

22. It is good husbandry to part with the dearest sinful interest, rather than hazard the losing of the soul; you may pluck out the right-eye, cut off the right-hand, and right-foot, and yet have a good bargain.

23. Prepare for affliction before it comes; and then when it comes, it will be the lighter.

24. Expectation of affliction is a good preparation for it: darkness is most sad and dismal to them who are always looking for light.

25. If the heart be loose from every thing below God, it will be no great matter to suffer in any inferior interest.

26. It conduceth much to the recovery of a patient, if he hath a good opinion of his Physician: He that is well assured that it is in very faithfulness that God afflicts him, will (e're long) come forth from the furnace a vessel meet for the Refiner.

27. Sweet meats and junkets delight the palat, but they breed choler; even so the sinful profits and pleasures of this world are (at present) pleasing to the flesh, but they may prove bitterness in the end.

28. How sad soever a godly mans condition is in this world, he may be merry: The Apostles sang Psalms while they were in Prison.

29. Care and industry are commendable, even in reference to things of outward concernment; but he that is most intent upon the honour of God, and his own spiritual and eternal good, is (of all others) the best husband.

30. Uprightness, is (certainly) very excellent, both because it is essential to every grace, and because God Himself hath honoured it with the title of perfection.

31. The shadow of a man in the Sun is at one part of the day longer, and shorter at another; though the man himself be of the same dimensions: Thus, though the state of a Christian in this world may seem to ebb and flow, as to outward comforts and enjoyments; yet, in respect of his spiritual being and interests, he is still the same.

32. Natural fruit-trees, when they grow old, decay, and give over bearing; but Christians, who are trees planted in Gods house, bring forth fruit even in their old age; *the path of the righteous is as the shining light, which shines more and more unto the perfect day.*

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33. They who are called to cleanly work, had need wash their hands first: The Ordinances of God are all so pure, that unless both heart and hands be washed, we are not rightly prepared for them.

34. He that labours hard in his calling all day, comforts himself with the thoughts of rest at night: If you would with comfort think of death, be faithful in the discharge of every duty to which God calls you, all the days of your life. *man*

35. Every man naturally takes most pleasure in those things which are according to his natural temper and disposition: when once the heart of a man is made spiritual, then spiritual things will be his greatest delight.

36. The reason why the Sun, Moon, and Stars seem so little to us, is because of our great distance from them: Therefore is God, Christ, the Gospel, the Covenant of Grace; yea, Heaven it self so little in our eyes, because we are (in the phrase of the Apostle) *afar off*.

37. He that truly knows what earth is, will not regard it; he that knows what heaven is, will not neglect it.

38. It is good to be always so employed, as that we may at any time without shame, give an account either to God or man.

39. It

39. It is much better to depart from iniquity here, than that Christ should bid you depart from Him hereafter.

40. Seek not great things for your self upon earth ; but lay up for your self treasure in heaven. It will be well with them to whom Christ will say at His glorious appearing , *Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.*

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